











MOTTO BY LESSING.

Ὑλὴ καὶ τρόποις μιμήστωσ διαφέρουσι.

Πλουτ. ποτ. ΑΦ. κατὰ Π. ἢ κατὰ Σ. ἐνδ

MOTTO BY TRANSLATOR.

“Macaulay told me that the reading of th's little boo  
formed an epoch in his mental history, and that he learne  
more from it than he had ever learned elsewhere.”

LEWES, *Life of Goethe*, p. 57.

# LAOCOON

BY  
GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING

*TRANSLATED WITH PREFACE AND NOTES*

BY THE LATE  
RT. HON. SIR ROBERT PHILLIMORE, BART.



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TO

**The Right Honourable W. E. Gladstone M.P.**

IN MEMORY

OF LONG FRIENDSHIP

AND A COMMON LOVE OF HOMER

THESE PAGES

ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY THE WRITER.

**NORF** —This edition is reprinted, with the kind consent of Sir Walter Phillimore, Bart., from the edition published by Messrs Macmillan in 1874. A few misprints have been corrected, and the notes have been transposed to the end of the volume. The publishers take this opportunity of expressing their sincere thanks to the family of the late Sir Robert Phillimore for permission to include his work in their New Universal Library.

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# P R E F A C E

## SECTION I

1. Birth and Education of Lessing<sup>1</sup>; 2. State of German Literature when Lessing began his career as author; 3. Lessing's Works generally; 4. Winkelmann. Lessing's *Laocoon*; 5. Ancient Versions of the story of Laocoon; 6. Notice of some of the principal Modern Authors referred to by Lessing; 7. Notice of Modern Authors not referred to by Lessing, but who wrote, before the publication of the *Laocoon*, on Poetry and Painting.

1. THE territory which once formed the ancient German margraviate of Lusatia was divided into Upper and Lower Lusatia. It lay between the Elbe and the Oder, situated to the north of Bohemia, to the south of Brandenburg, and to the west of Silesia. The race which dwelt on the northern declivities of the Giant mountains (Riesen Gebirge), which separate Silesia from Bohemia, were men of robust and vigorous minds; and early in the seventeenth century intellectual life began to develop itself simultaneously in Upper Lusatia and Silesia.

In one of the six towns of Upper Lusatia, of which Görlitz was the intellectual centre, Johann Gottfried Lessing and his wife, Justine Salome, whose maiden name was Feller, dwelt. He was the Lutheran pastor of Kamenz; and of these parents, on the 22nd of January, 1729, Johann

<sup>1</sup> The principal authorities to which I have had recourse for the materials of this sketch are: G. E. Lessing's *Leben und Werke*, vol. i, by Danzel; vol. ii, by Guraer: Leipzig, 1849. G. E. Lessing's *Sein Leben und Seine Werke*, von A. Stahr: Berlin, 1859. Goedeke's *Grundriss zur Geschichte der Deutschen Dichtung*, 1, 611, § 221. Ger-vinus's *Geschichte der Poetischen National-Literatur*, 4, 318: Leipzig, 1843. *German Classics*, by Dr Buchheim, vol. iii, Clarendon Press Series: Oxford, 1873. Gostwick and Harris's *Outlines of German Literature*, 201.



Gotthold Ephraim, commonly called Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, the writer of the *Laocoon*, was born. He died at Brunswick in 1781.

Logical powers of a high order, an intense love of study, which he derived from his father's example and teaching, restless incessant eagerness of inquiry into every subject unchecked by any reverence for authority, keen susceptibilities, constant literary and polemical controversy, unsettled religious opinions, very straitened circumstances, unquiet habits, a craving for excitement which sometimes led him to the gaming table, a passion for that kind of society—in which the stream of life ran rapidly, though turbidly—and domestic sorrow, combined to chequer the fifty-two years of his very distinguished and very unhappy life.

His public education, begun at Meissen in the year 1741, was continued at the University of Leipzig in 1746, where he renounced the studies and career of a Theologian, which his father had wished him to follow. He went to Berlin in 1748. He resided for some time at Leipzig, and in 1760 became a member of the Academy there. He supported himself by translating foreign works, and taught himself French, Italian, and Spanish. He resided at Breslau 1760–1764, where he was official secretary to General Tauenzien. He was at Berlin from 1765 to 1767. He lived at Hamburg, where he became a journalist, during 1767–1769. He was appointed by the Duke of Brunswick Privy Councillor and Librarian of a great Library at Wolfenbüttel; there he took up his abode in May 1770. In this library he discovered, and afterwards published, a treatise of Berengarius<sup>1</sup>, supposed to be lost, respecting the Holy Eucharist. In 1775 he accompanied Prince Leopold of Brunswick in his journey to Italy. He married, in April, 1776, a widow, Eva König, who died in 1778. He appears to have felt her loss very deeply.

<sup>1</sup> Guraer, 2, 11; Goedeke, 611, 612, 663.

2. German literature is one of the youngest<sup>1</sup> of the European family. At the time when Lessing began to write it was in a very meagre condition.

Leibnitz and Wolff had indeed, in their different paths, attained deserved literary honours. The former had been dead nearly half a century, and wrote his great works in a foreign language. The latter was too ponderous and too scholastic to be popular. Neither left any abiding marks upon their native language or literature<sup>2</sup>.

Gottsched and his school had done their utmost to lower the national taste to the level of a base imitation of French literature; and the efforts of the Swiss, Breitinger and Bodmer, from whom works of considerable merit appeared simultaneously at Zurich in 1740, and upon whom the dawn of a better day had shone, had not sufficient power to stem the tide. Haller, Hagedorn, Kästners, Rabener, Liscow, keeping aloof from the contest between Gottsched and the Swiss, contributed something, but not much, to the improvement of German literature. Klopstock, indeed, vindicated the higher claims of poetry to be the fruit of genius—unattainable by the intellect alone or mere learned industry—and to be far above the frozen mediocrity and petty conventional decencies, within which Gottsched, in his absence of all the susceptibility of genius, his blind admiration for the French imitation of classical antiquity, would have confined it. But it was reserved for Lessing thoroughly to awaken the sleeping German mind, and imbue it with a true philosophy, which included the romantic as well as the classical school within the domain of poetry; from which Gottsched's narrow and uninspired mind would have excluded Shakspeare, Milton, Ariosto, and Tasso. 'Lessing schrieb deutsch', says

<sup>1</sup> 'Die deutsche Literatur ist eine der jüngsten unter der Europäischen', Schlegel, *Kritische Schriften*, i, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Danzel, i, 118; De Quincey, vol. xii, 282; Gervinus, 4, 63; Goedeke, 560-1.

Gervinus. He was himself 'unaffectirt deutsch'; and because he was a genuine German, and not a French or Englishman travestied, he drank at the pure fountains of classical lore, unalloyed by their passage through a foreign channel<sup>1</sup>.

3. Of the many literary productions of Lessing, very few are now familiarly known out of, perhaps even in, Germany. Three at least of his plays are still read.

*Minna Von Barnhelm*<sup>2</sup>, finished in 1765, but first published in its corrected form in 1776, praised by Goethe as the most genuine production of the Seven Years' War, and the most perfect expression of German nationality, and as having been a peace-maker between Prussia and Saxony, is still a great favourite of the German stage; and the very pretty and interesting recent edition by Dr Buchheim<sup>3</sup>, with English notes, a critical analysis, and a sketch of Lessing's life, is likely to restore its popularity to the libraries at least of England.

*Nathan der Weise*. His greatest dramatic, and, as some think, his most philosophical work, founded on the Third Novella of Boccaccio<sup>4</sup>, still lives on account of its intrinsic merit. It was no doubt a consequence of Lessing's friendship with the Jew Mendelssohn. It has been supposed to have been the most effective sermon of the day on the Duty of Toleration in matters of Religion, and to have generated a much-needed and beneficial change in the social status and estimation of the Jews in Germany. The English reader may be interested in comparing with it the affecting legend which ends J. Taylor's *Liberty of Prophesying*, and Miss Edgeworth's novel of *Harrington*. The tragedy of *Emilia Galotti* was founded on the story of *Virginius*,

<sup>1</sup> iv, 219.

<sup>2</sup> *Minna von Barnhelm, oder das Soldatenglück*, Goedeke, 615.

<sup>3</sup> Published in the Oxford Clarendon Press Series, 1873.

<sup>4</sup> *Novella Terza. Melchisedeck giuocò con una Novella di tre anelle cossu un gran pericolo dal Saladino apparecchiatiogli.*

but the scene of the drama is in Italy, and the time is modern.

If ever man deserved the epithet, in which the Germans delight, of 'Polyhistor', Lessing deserved it; and it has been often bestowed upon him by his countrymen. The ordinary, indeed the educated, reader of the *Laocoon* is astonished at the way in which Lessing takes for granted his acquaintance with recondite subjects. Of course everybody knows, he seems to think, about the 'politische verse' of Constantinus Manasses, about Skanopocia, the Ghezzi, and Crocylegmus. I have ventured to write some notes upon these and other references.

It was at Berlin that Lessing contracted habits of intimate and lasting friendship with Mendelssohn and Nicolai. Here, in conjunction with his friends, he wrote literary trifles for newspapers, and made translations for booksellers; and here also he laid the foundation of the *Letters on Modern Literature*<sup>1</sup>. This was the first publication of the time in which a liberal, unfettered and comprehensive spirit, aided by a critical faculty of high order, examined into the claims and merits of the ancients, and did justice to the literature of England. In the admirable criticisms of these letters the shadow of his *Laocoon*, though the substance did not appear till long afterwards, was cast before.

4. We are now brought to the threshold of the work on which the literary renown of Lessing is mainly and deservedly built. It is the work of which the following pages contain a translation, his famous *Laocoon*, which first saw the light in 1766. Lessing, besides the notes which he appended to the first and completed part, had prepared many notes for a second and third part. They are unfortunately only notes: but not a few of them are pregnant with suggestion, and I have not shrunk from the

<sup>1</sup> *Briefe die neueste Literatur betreffend*. The papers subscribed F 11 and G are by Lessing, the others for the most part by Abbt, Mendelssohn, and Resewitz: Goedeke, 615.

labour of translating the latter as well as the former.

Winkelmann<sup>1</sup> had remarked in his essays on the *Imitation of the Ancients in Painting and Statuary*<sup>2</sup>, that the principal characteristics of Greek sculpture were simplicity and quiet grandeur. The study of the Laocoon led Winkelmann to this conclusion; observing that natural beauty underlaid the beautiful forms of Greek art, he thought somewhat perhaps in the spirit of a French writer of tragedy, that greatness of soul was intended to overcome all expression of pain in Laocoon.

Lessing seems to have felt a reverence for Winkelmann<sup>3</sup>, which he felt for no other authority. This was partly because he was not unaffected by the general enthusiasm in Germany for him at this period. Lessing criticises his dogmas with studious gentleness and unusual forbearance.

The authority of Winkelmann upon art is still considerable, though much diminished. Fuseli was a violent hater, and his opinions as to contemporaries must always be read with a recollection of this fact. But I am not aware that he had any animosity to the memory of Winkelmann. His opinion of him, in a sketch of Lessing's life, is not uninteresting. Fuseli says:

'About the middle of the last century the German critics, established at Rome, began to claim the

<sup>1</sup> Assassinated 1768, at Trieste, on his way home from Italy, where he had been since 1758.

<sup>2</sup> *Gedanken ueber die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke, in der Malerey und Bildhauerkunst*. Leipzig, 1756.

<sup>3</sup> Winkelmann writes to a friend, who sent him extracts from the *Laocoon*, that he had bought the book before he left Dresden, and adds — 'Lessing von dem ich leider nichts gesehen hatte schreibt, wie man geschrieben zu haben wunschen möchte'. He would have written to him if he had not heard he was coming to Rome. 'Es verdient derselbe also, wo man sel vertheidigen kann, eine würdige Antwort. Wie es ruhmlich ist von würdigen Leuten gelobt zu werden so kann es auch rühmlich werden ihrer Beurtheilung würdig geachtet zu seyn'. The report at Leipzig that Winkelmann was furious against Laocoon must have been false. See G. E. Lessing's *Leben*, etc., herausgegeben von R. C. Lessing.

exclusive privilege of teaching the art (of painting), and to form a complete system of antique style. The verdicts of Mengs and Winkelmann became the oracles of Antiquaries, Dilettanti, and artists from the Pyrenees to the utmost north of Europe, have been detailed, and are not without their influence here. Winkelmann was the parasite of the fragments that fell from the conversation or the tablets of Mengs, a deep scholar, and better fitted to comment on a classic than to give lessons on art and style, he reasoned himself into frigid reveries and Platonic dreams on beauty. As far as the taste or the instructions of his tutor directed him, he is right, whenever they are, and between his own learning and the tuition of the other, his history of art delivers a specious system and a prodigious number of useful observations. He has not, however, in his regulation of epochs, discriminated styles and masters with the precision, attention, and acumen, which, from the advantages of his situation and habits, might have been expected; and disappoints us as often by meagreness, neglect, and confusion, as he offends by laboured and inflated rhapsodies on the most celebrated monuments of Art. To him Germany owes the shackles of her artists, and the narrow limits of their aim; from him they have learnt to substitute the means for the end, and by a hopeless chase after what they call beauty, to lose what alone can make beauty interesting—expression and mind. The works of Mengs himself are no doubt full of the most useful information, deep observation, and often consummate criticism. He has traced and distinguished the principles of the moderns from those of the ancients; and in his comparative view of the design, colour, composition, and expression of Raffaello, Correggio, and Tiziano, with luminous perspicuity and deep precision, pointed out the prerogative or inferiority of each. As an artist he is an instance of what perseverance, study, expe-

rience, and encouragement can achieve to supply the place of genius<sup>1</sup>.

I have mentioned the extraordinary reverence of Lessing for Winkelmann; but Lessing, nourished upon Homer and Sophocles, could not bring himself to accept the dictum of Winkelmann about Laocoon. Lessing, on the contrary, maintains that the Greeks would have considered the scream of bodily anguish quite compatible with greatness of soul—a proposition which in Germany was fruitful in results as to the theory of tragedy, and which overcame the angry and resolute opposition of Herder, and won the approbation of Schiller and indeed of Goethe. The first and highest law of ancient art Lessing maintained was the production of Beauty; this Art therefore avoided all caricature, all extremes of passion which bordered on what was hideous. The true and proper end of art is that which she ever works out for herself without the aid of any other art. That end is, in Plastic Art, corporeal beauty, to be found only in men, and in them only by virtue of an ideal<sup>2</sup>.

Winkelmann<sup>3</sup> had said, 'In the anguish and suffering of the Laocoon, which is shown in every muscle and nerve, we see the tried spirit of a great man, who wrestles with torment and seeks to suppress and confine within itself the outbreak of sensibility. He does not burst forth into a loud cry as Virgil describes him to us, but only sad and still sighs come from him, etc'<sup>4</sup>.

This comparison stimulated the critical faculty of Lessing, and together with a perusal of the works

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to *Fuseli's Life and Writings*, vol. ii, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> See Ch. XX, *infra*, and compare Sir Joshua Reynolds's *Works*, vol. ii, 73, 13th Discourse.

<sup>3</sup> For references by Winkelmann to the Laocoon, see i, 31, 65, 216, 251, 255, 382; ii, 203-206, 208, 209, 228; iii, 84, 320; iv, 61, 105, 148, 160, 173, 267, 370, 372, 381, 388, 418, 419; v, 49, 105, 119, 159, 221, 250, 417; vi, 1, 101, 131, 263; vii, 97, 98, 187, 269, 291. Ed. Dresden, 1817.

<sup>4</sup> *Kunst der Zeichnung unter den Griechen*, 4 Kap. § 34; 7 Band, p. 98, ed. 1817.

of Spence and Caylus, led to his profound examination of the then generally accepted thesis which had been current even before the time of Plutarch and Pliny; namely, that Poetry was a speaking Picture, and Painting a dumb Poem. I will here cite at length the passage in Plutarch which refers to this adage and also contains the motto which Lessing adopted, though he did not quite understand it, for his *Laocoon* :

Τοῦτο τὸ ἔργον Εὐφράνωρ ἔγραψε, καὶ πάρεστιν ὄρᾱν ἐν εἰκόνι τῆς μάχης τὸ σύγγραμμα καὶ τὴν ἀντέρεισιν ἀλκῆς καὶ θυμοῦ καὶ πνεύματος γέμουσαν. ἀλλ' οὐκ ἂν οἶμαι τὴν ζωγράφου κρίσιν προσθείητε πρὸς τὸν στρατηγὸν, οὐδ' ἀνάσχοισθε τῶν προτιμώντων τὸν πίνακα τοῦ τροπαίου, καὶ τὸ μίμημα τῆς ἀληθείας. πλὴν ὁ Σιμωνίδης, τὴν μὲν ζωγραφίαν, ποίησιν σιωπῶσαν προσαγορεύων, τὴν δὲ ποίησιν, ζωγραφίαν λαλοῦσαν. ἅς γὰρ οἱ ζωγράφοι πράξεις ὡς γινομένας δεικνύουσι, ταύτας οἱ λόγοι γεγενημένας διηγούνται καὶ συγγράφουσιν· εἰ δὲ οἱ μὲν χρώμασι καὶ σχήμασιν, οἱ δ' ὀνόμασι καὶ λέξεσι ταῦτα δηλοῦσιν, ὕλη καὶ τρόποις μιμήσεως διαφέρουσι· τέλος δ' ἀμφοτέροις ἐν ὑπόκειται, καὶ τῶν ἱστορικῶν κράτιστος ὁ τὴν διήγησιν ὥσπερ γραφὴν πάθεσι καὶ προσώποις εἰδωλοποιήσας<sup>1</sup>.

The dictum of Simonides, whether correct or incorrect, was intended to be construed and applied

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Comm. Bellone an Pace clariores fuerint Athenienses*, v. 7, p. 366, ed. Reiske : 'This action Euphranor painted, and you can see in similitude the story of the battle, and the contest teeming with might, courage, and spirit; but you would not, I think, make comparison of the painter and the general, nor endure those who would honour the picture above the trophy, and the imitation above the reality. Yet Simonides addressed painting as SILENT poetry, and poetry as SPEAKING painting. For those actions which painters portray as taking place, are, when they have taken place, recounted and described by words. But if the one set present these actions by colours and figures, and the other by names and phrases, they differ in the material and in the modes of their imitation. Both, however, have one object, and the best historian is he who, in the passions and persons of his story, has produced a series of images as if they were painted in a picture'. 'Ὑλὴ καὶ τρόποις μιμήσεως διαφέρουσι'. 'They differ in the material and in the modes of their expression'. This is the passage which I mentioned as having been chosen by Lessing for the motto of his work, and though, as will have been seen, he slightly misconstrued it, a better could not have been chosen.



with the recollection that the variety of the means employed by the poet and the painter was a matter of common everyday knowledge. The author of the dictum, moreover, knew that it would receive modification in practice from the right feeling of the artist. It has been said 'to be the privilege of the ancients in nothing to do too much or too little'<sup>1</sup>.

5. The fable of Laocoon has been variously related by writers before and after the time of Virgil. As to the last, according to the version of Quintus Calaber<sup>2</sup>, when Laocoon struck the wooden horse with his spear an earthquake was caused by Minerva which stupefied him with terror. Nevertheless, when the horse was moved into the city he was urgent that it should be burnt; and then Minerva invoked two serpents from the island of Calydna, which devoured the children of Laocoon in vain stretching forth their hands to him for succour. Then the serpents rush to the temple of Minerva and disappear beneath the earth, and Laocoon is smitten with blindness. Hyginus, the next writer on the subject after Virgil, speaks of the children being slain with their father, and makes Laocoon the priest of Neptune and not of Apollo.

As to the authors before the time of Virgil who wrote about Laocoon, they were Lysimachus, Lycophron, and a once very celebrated poet, Euphoriion, of whom we know from Quintilian<sup>3</sup> that Virgil had a very high opinion. These were writers of the Alexandrian School, to whom those of the Augustan School, and especially Virgil, seem to have been much indebted<sup>4</sup>. Laocoon was also probably the theme of more than one Greek writer. It was the subject, we know, of a lost tragedy of Sophocles<sup>5</sup>.

The so-called Cyclic Poets were, according to Heyne<sup>6</sup>, (to whom I am chiefly indebted for these observations), the real fountain of these different

<sup>1</sup> Guainer, 11, 13.

<sup>2</sup> x, 1, 36.

<sup>3</sup> Dionys. Halicar. 1, 43.

<sup>4</sup> xii, 388-409.

<sup>5</sup> Cicero, *Tusc. Q.* iii, 19.

<sup>6</sup> Excurs. v, vi, ad lib. ii Virgil.

versions, and above all Leschis, 'quem utique Quintus expressisse visus est'.

Cardinal Sadolet's comparatively modern poem on the Laocoon is, as will be seen, given at length by Lessing, who highly esteemed it, in a note to one of the sections of this work <sup>1</sup>.

Lessing made use of the fable of Laocoon as furnishing the occasion for expressing certain principles of criticism discriminating between the arts of Poetry and Painting. He did not intend—as he more than once, I think, says—to write a philosophical treatise, *modo et forma*, on art. One of his biographers has observed that the pursuit of Truth was more agreeable to him than the capture of the object of his pursuit. He delighted in the chase itself and the opportunities which it afforded for the exercise of his vigorous sense, great erudition, and masculine understanding.

6. I have written in the Appendix a few concise historical notes to each Chapter, illustrative of the authors mentioned by Lessing, and have added a few additional references. To many readers the information thus supplied will probably be unnecessary, but there are some, to whom I hope it will not be disagreeable, and to both classes it may be perhaps convenient.

There are, however, two or three authors whom Lessing, for purposes of explanation or censure, very frequently mentions: and there are others whom one is surprised that he does not mention. I will say a word on both these topics.

As to the former, the first author in date is Dryden.

With Dryden's *Parallel of Poetry and Painting* (an essay prefixed in 1695 to Du Fresnoy's Latin poem *De Arte Graphica*) Lessing seems to have been well acquainted. The essay, though it bears marks of his unrivalled style, has not contributed much to the fame of Dryden. It was truly observed, that

<sup>1</sup> See Ch. VI, Note 3, *infra*.

'wanting a competent knowledge of painting, he suffered himself to be misled by an unskilful guide'. As to the general subject, Dryden relied greatly on the authority of Bellori, to whom Lessing also refers<sup>1</sup>. Dryden says in one place<sup>2</sup> 'that the principal end of Painting is to please, of Poetry to instruct'; and in another place<sup>3</sup>, 'that one main end of Poetry and Painting is to please'. . . 'The imitation of Nature is, therefore, justly constituted as the general, indeed the only, rule of pleasing both in Poetry and Painting'<sup>4</sup>. Then he refers to Aristotle's opinion, which is considered fully hereafter in the notes to the *Laocoon*.

The poem of Du Fresnoy was translated into English verse by Mason in 1782, and was published, with valuable notes, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and is to be found in the last edition of his Works.

Du Fresnoy begins with a fragment from Horace's *Ars Poetica*, 'Ut Pictura Poesis erit'<sup>5</sup>. Mason cites in a note the adage of Simonides from Plutarch, and says 'There is a Latin line somewhere to the same purpose, but I know not whether ancient or modern, "*Poesis est Pictura loquens, mutum Pictura Poema*"'.

Francis Junius was born at Heidelberg in or about 1589. A man of vast classical erudition, and a great traveller, a friend of Grotius, Salmasius, Vossius (his brother-in-law), and Archbishop Usher.

In 1620 he came to England, and was received into the household of the Earl of Arundel and Surrey. Here he wrote his folio volume, *De Pictura Veterum*, on the Art of Painting among the Ancients, which was first published in Holland. He died at Windsor in 1678, and in his eighty-eighth or eighty-ninth year. He was buried at Windsor; and the University of Oxford, to whom he bequeathed his manuscript and books out of gratitude, caused a Latin inscription to be placed over his tomb. In it he is described as

<sup>1</sup> Works, iv, 311, ed. Malone.

<sup>2</sup> See Ch. II, Note 17, *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> Works, iv, 318.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* 322

<sup>5</sup> v, 361.

*pene nonagenarius*, and as one 'qui per omnem aetatem sine querela aut injuria cujusquam musis tantum et sibi vacavit'. The edition which I have used was published at Rotterdam 1694. Lessing blames Spence for relying on the accuracy of Junius's citations without verification. They were often very incorrect<sup>1</sup>.

Joseph Spence<sup>2</sup> was for ten years Professor of Poetry at Oxford. He spent five years on the Continent, chiefly at Florence and Rome. He published Dialogues in ten books, in royal folio, in 1747. His work was entitled, *Polymetis; or, an Inquiry concerning the Agreement between the Works of the Roman Poets and the Remains of the Ancient Artists, being an attempt to illustrate them mutually from one another*<sup>3</sup>.

'When you look on the old pictures' (Spence says, p. 3) 'or sculptures, you look on the works of men who thought much in the same train with the old poets. There was generally the greatest union in their designs; and when they are engaged on the same subject they must be the best explainers of one another. As we lie so far north from this last great seat of Empire, we are placed out of the reach of consulting these finer remains of antiquity so much and so frequently as one could wish. The only way of supplying this defect to any degree among us is by copies, prints, and drawings'.

(P. 285): 'I think, therefore, there can be no room to doubt that some of the best comments we could have on the ancient poets, might be drawn from the works of the artists who were their contemporaries; and whose remains often present to our eyes the very things which the others have delivered down to us only in words'.

<sup>1</sup> See Ch. XXIX, *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> See Ch. VII, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> It contains forty-one plates, seventeen 'ornamental pieces at the close of the Dialogues', three figures (disposed in the manner of an ancient relievo) in the frontispiece: the Goddess of Painting, the God of Poetry, and the Genius of Sculpture, from antiques.

This author is continually referred to in the *Laocoon*. He and Caylus are the subject of some of Lessing's severest and justest criticisms.

Jonathan Richardson published *Works on Painting* in 1725. Discourses on 1. The Theory of Painting ; 2. Essay on the Art of Criticism, so far as it relates to Painting ; 3. The Science of a Connoisseur. A new edition of the *Works* was prepared by his son, and dedicated to Sir Joshua Reynolds, in 1773.

In 1728 there was published in Amsterdam, in three volumes, *Traité de la Peinture et de la Sculpture*, and this is the work to which Lessing constantly refers. 'It is' (Pilkington remarks, in his *Dictionary of Painters*) 'a curious circumstance that a man who could write so well upon the art should so ill apply to his own practice the rules he gave to others. Full of theory, profound in reflections, and possessed of a numerous collection of drawings, he appears not to have possessed the smallest invention as applicable to the Painter's art, and drew nothing well below the head'<sup>1</sup>.

Hogarth (born 1698, died 1764) published *The Analysis of Beauty, written with a view of fixing the fluctuating ideas of Taste*, in 1753. The object of the work was to show that the curve was the natural line of beauty. But Hogarth had no classical knowledge, and indeed was, generally speaking, very uneducated. In his chap. iii, 'Of Simplicity or Distinctness', he says 'The authors' (for there were three concerned in the work) 'of as fine a group of figures in sculpture as ever was made either by ancients or moderns' (I mean Laocoon and his two sons) 'chose to be guilty of making the sons half the father's size, though they have every mark of being designed for men, rather than not bring their composition within the boundary of a pyramid'.

Lessing does not refer to this passage, and very possibly it escaped his notice. Sir J. Reynolds

<sup>1</sup> See Ch. XI, Note 1, *infra*.

says<sup>1</sup>: 'It naturally occurs to oppose the sensible conduct of Gainsborough, in this respect, to that of our late excellent Hogarth, who, with all his extraordinary talents, was not blessed with this knowledge of his own deficiency ; or of the bounds which were set to the extent of his own powers. After this admirable artist had spent the greater part of his life in an active, busy, and, we may add, successful attention to the ridicule of life ; after he had invented a new species of dramatic painting, in which probably he will never be equalled, and had stored his mind with infinite materials to explain and illustrate the domestic and familiar scenes of common life, which were generally, and ought to have been always, the subject of his pencil, he very imprudently, or rather presumptuously, attempted the great historical style, for which his previous habits had by no means prepared him ; he was indeed so entirely unacquainted with the principles of this style, that he was not even aware that any artificial preparation was at all necessary. It is to be regretted that any part of the life of such a genius should be fruitlessly employed. Let his failure teach us not to indulge ourselves in the vain imagination, that by a momentary resolution we can give either dexterity to the hand, or a new habit to the mind'.

7. And now let me say a word as to authors whom Lessing does not mention, but with whom he was acquainted.

The Abbé Du Bos wrote his *Réflexions critiques sur la Poésie et la Peinture* in 1719. In this work he includes, as will be presently noticed, several ingenious chapters on music, and the relation of that art to poetry and painting. He died at Paris in 1742. His work was very highly esteemed by Voltaire ; and perhaps the tone and spirit of it bore a closer affinity to the *Laocoon* than the work of any

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii, Disc. 14, 88.

other predecessor of Lessing. His style is perspicuous and agreeable; his criticisms generally luminous. Lessing was well acquainted with him, and certainly made use of him<sup>1</sup>. It is strange that no reference should be made to him in the *Laocoon*. It is true that Lessing differed from him as to the principle of his comparison of poetry and painting, Du Bos adopting for his motto 'Ut Pictura Poesis'. But Du Bos laid down many of the sound principles which Lessing relied upon. Above all he held that Poetry could attain to the sublime, which Painting could not reach, because she was limited to the representation of one moment of a continuing action.

Daniel Webb published, among other works, *An Enquiry into the Beauties of Painting, and into the Merits of the most celebrated Painters, ancient and modern*, in 1760<sup>2</sup>; and *Observations on the Correspondences between Poetry and Music*, in 1769<sup>3</sup>; and *Remarks on the Beauties of Poetry*, in 1762<sup>4</sup>.

He sought to establish the position that poetry was an union of powers of music and painting. He considered Shakspeare to be as great a painter as Titian. Effective colouring ought in his opinion to be the great object of the painter.

Webb is said to have derived all his information on æsthetical subjects from Mengs, with whom he lived on terms of intimacy for some years. If this were so, he never acknowledged the obligation. In his turn, however, 'suos patitur manes', for I cannot find that Lessing ever refers to Webb, though his obligation, if any, was certainly much lighter: yet sometimes there is a remarkable correspondence in their ideas. Lessing was infinitely his superior, however, in every literary respect.

Harris (born 1709, died 1780) first published his treatises, *Concerning Art, Music, Painting, and Poetry*, in 1765, a year before the publication of the *Laocoon*.

<sup>1</sup> Guraer, ii, 15.

<sup>3</sup> Ib. 1769.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. London, 1787.

<sup>4</sup> Ib. 1762.

These treatises have great merit ; they are not referred to by Lessing, who, but for his extraordinary erudition, might be presumed not to have been acquainted with them. I have introduced several extracts from them in the notes <sup>1</sup>.

## SECTION II

1. Effect of the *Laocoon* in Germany ; 2. On the Continent of Europe.

1. The effect of the *Laocoon* in Germany was marvellous ; while on the Continent of Europe it was very great. It is hardly too much to say that what Adam Smith did, in the domain of Political Economy, by his *Wealth of Nations*, Lessing did, in the domain of Art and Criticism, by this memorable treatise. It created a new era in æsthetic<sup>2</sup> culture and literature. It has leavened not only the teaching and the practice of Professors of Art and practical Artists, but, like other great works, it has purified the taste, and informed the mind of many, who have benefited by the streams flowing in various channels from a fountain head which they have never visited.

After the publication of the *Laocoon* a different atmosphere, so to speak, of æsthetic taste and criti-

<sup>1</sup> See Ch. II, Note 18, and Ch. VI, Note 2, *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> 'In English, this expression, feeling, like all others of a psychological application, was primarily of a purely physical relation, being originally employed to denote the sensations we experience through the sense of touch, and in this meaning it still continues to be employed. From this, its original relation to matter and the corporeal sensibility, it came, by a very natural analogy, to express our conscious states of mind in general, but particularly in relation to the qualities of pleasure and pain, by which they are characterised. Such is the fortune of the term in English ; and precisely similar is that of the cognate term, *Gefühl*, in German. The same, at least a similar, history might be given of the Greek term *αἴσθησις*, and of the Latin *sensus*, *sensatio*, with their immediate and mediate derivatives in the different Romance dialects of modern Europe,—the Italian, Spanish, French, and English dialects'. SIR W. HAMILTON'S *Lectures on Metaphysics*, Lecture xli. See also Lecture xlii.



cism prevailed, and was insensibly imbibed by posterity, first in Germany, then on the Continent, and lastly in England.

The similarity and harmony of the two arts, Poetry and Painting, had been frequently and copiously discussed; but Lessing reversed the medal, and investigated the inherent dissimilarity, and showed that this dissimilarity was founded upon laws peculiar to each art, and which often compelled the one to tread a different path from the other.

Lessing perceived the important relation of the category of time to painting and the plastic art generally; he saw that the artist had only a moment in which to tell his tale, and he maintained that the right choice of this moment was everything (a remark which he often repeated); that it should be one which was most fruitful or pregnant with suggestion, which allowed the freest scope to the imagination of the spectator, who the more he looked at what was represented, the more he ought to exercise thought. Therefore plastic art ought not to exhibit the last and extremest thing, which left no room for the working of the imagination.

Lessing held that the artist ought not to express what was absolutely momentary and transitory, and the ancient artist never did this. It has been observed that the idea in Lessing's mind was right, but perhaps not quite correctly formulated in language, inasmuch as what is to be avoided by the artist is not whatever is absolutely momentary, but that of which the inspection could only be tolerated for a moment, because it introduced what was hideous. The painter employs figures and colours in *space*, the poet articulate sounds in *time*. Lessing having considered the laws of painting or plastic art generally, then considered those of poetry; his main position is that the law respecting the category of time, applicable to painting, was inapplicable to poetry.

It was competent to the poet, by previous recital, to prepare the mind of his audience for an effect, or by subsequent recital to soften the consequences of the effect: and in the Laocoon of the poet who could employ successive action in aid of his mental pictures, there was a much wider scope of representation than in the Laocoon of the artist.

Virgil might represent his Laocoon clothed, because in poetry clothing is no clothing, concealing nothing. The artist could not even venture to bind the fillet of the priest on the brow of the Laocoon, because he would have concealed the brow, which is the seat of expression.

The best poetical picture therefore possesses features of which the artist can make no use; but the converse is not true. Every trait of the artist's work may be made use of by the poet, and Lessing thought it far more probable that the artist had present to his mind the Laocoon of the poet, than that the poet had present to his mind the Laocoon of the artist. Lessing is led by the development of his theory on this subject to condemn Count Caylus and the French essayists on art, who would compel the painter to adopt and paint the pictures in Homer, and the English writers, especially Spence, who thought that the ancient poets could be explained by ancient works of art, such as statues and models, without exercising any discrimination between the different nature of the two arts, or observing the far wider scope and province of poetry.

Finally, Lessing arrives at the goal which he had proposed to himself, and establishes the supremacy of poetry over all other arts. At the same time he revives the old precepts of Horace, and denies altogether to poetry the domain of pure description. 'A flower', he says, 'by a Dutch painter recalls all that word painting of it can effect. Homer does not describe the shield of Achilles when made, but he paints the action of the divine maker of it, and thus places the whole before our eyes. The trans-

cent beauty of Helen is painted, by Homer, not by descriptive detail, but in the effect which it produced on the aged counsellors of Troy'. That Lessing carried the doctrine, that poetry had nothing to do with description, too far, in his eagerness to destroy the passion for descriptive poetry which prevailed in his youth, and which an extravagant admiration of Thomson's *Seasons* had done much to foster, is a proposition which I think the reader of the second volume of Humboldt's *Kosmos* will not dispute.

I purpose to return to this subject a little further on, but I may observe, how often it happens that a few words of description animate the painter's picture, awakening the imagination to the exquisite taste and beauty of a performance which, of itself, would have commanded admiration only for the merits of imitation and execution. For instance, it is not difficult to imagine the picture of an old man-of-war towed by a steam-tug up a river. The execution of such a subject may deserve great praise and give great satisfaction to the beholder. But add to the representation the statement that it is 'The fighting *Téméraire* towed to her last berth', and a series of the most stirring events of our national history fills our imagination, while the contrast between the ancient and modern powers of navigation is also, but, not alone, forcibly presented to the mind.

In the following lines the picture of a painting seems to transcend the painting itself:

2 *Servant.*

Dost thou love pictures? we will fetch thee straight  
Adonis, painted by a running brook,  
And Cythera, all in sedges hid,  
That seem to move and wanton with her breath,  
Even as the waving sedges play with wind.

*Lord.*

We'll show thee Io as she was a maid,  
And how she was beguiled and surprised,  
As lively painted as the deed was done.

3 *Servant.*

Or Daphne, roaming through a thorny wood,  
Scratching her legs that one shall swear she bleeds,  
And at that sight shall sad Apollo weep ;  
So workmanly the blood and tears are drawn <sup>1</sup>.

Goethe <sup>2</sup> wrote his essay 'upon Laocoon' in 1797, in the Propyläen<sup>3</sup>. At the close of this essay he considers the relation of the subject to poetry. 'It is a great injustice', he argues, 'against Virgil and poetry to compare the most carefully executed masterpiece of sculpture with the episodic treatment of the same subject in the *Aeneid*. The unfortunate tempest-tossed Aeneas had to tell the whole story of the taking of Troy, and to excuse the incredible folly of introducing the wooden horse into the city.

'The history of the *Laocoon*', he says, 'is a kind of rhetorical argument, which admits of varied exaggeration. Hence the picture of the enormous serpents advancing from the sea and fastening upon the children of Laocoon who had injured the horse. The people fly—no one dares any more to be a patriot, and the hearer, aghast at the horrors, finds the introduction of the horse not unnatural. In Virgil the history of the *Laocoon* is only a means to a higher end, and it is still a very moot question whether the event be *per se* a poetical incident'.

This work of Goethe is of rather a feeble character. The mind of Lessing was of a more robust and manly texture than the mind of Goethe.

Mr Lewes observes that 'Instruction in the theory of art he (Goethe) gained from Oeser, from Winkelmann, and from *Laocoon*, the incomparable little book which Lessing at this period care-

<sup>1</sup> *Taming of the Shrew*, Induction, scene ii.

<sup>2</sup> *Werke*, 38, B. 49.

<sup>3</sup> Goedeke, 824. The Propyläen meant the vestibule of the Temple of Knowledge or Truth. See *Einleitung in die Pro. Goethe's Werke*, B. 38, 1. It is remarkable that in this essay he does not refer to Lessing's work, to which he was much beholden, and with which he was well acquainted.

lessly flung upon the world. Its effect upon Goethe can only be appreciated by those who in early life have met with this work and risen from it with minds widened, strengthened, inspired<sup>1</sup>.

Frederick Schlegel<sup>2</sup>, in his work on Lessing, remarked with justice 'that the mere erudition of Germans was undeniable, what was wanted for the foundation of their literature was the substratum of a learned, vigorous and yet popular spirit of criticism, continued on the model which Lessing had furnished—a free spirit of investigation struggling to attain just ideas of art, vigorous in logic, but quick in sympathy, and extending to the whole domain of literature'.

2. Whether the literary rank and position of Lessing in Germany was ever equal to that of Dr Johnson in England—whether a parallel can be instituted between Lessing and Shaftesbury, the author of the *Characteristics*, are propositions which, in spite of the considerable authority of Mr De Quincey in favour of them, are to my mind very doubtful. The effect produced by the *Laocoon* upon the European Continent out of Germany, though great, was by no means equal to its merits. Europe generally seems to have taken less interest in it than in his other works. Vanderbourg appears – I have never seen the work—to have published a French translation in 1780. But it had no influence on the criticism then prevalent in France. Another French translation appeared in 1802, which is more generally known. Lessing had prepared a French preface, and intended to have translated the whole work into that language. It is perhaps fortunate that he did not execute his intention. His power of writing French, if we may judge from the preface which he translated into this language, was much less than he appears himself to have been aware of.

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Goethe*, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> Lessing's *Geist aus seinen Schriften, oder dessen Gedanken und Meinungen zusammengestellt und erläutert*. Leipzig. 1804.

## SECTION III

1. Influence of the *Laocoon* in England ; 2. Writers and Lecturers on Poetry and Painting. Lord Macaulay ; 3. English Translations of the *Laocoon*.

1. Lord Bacon, in his *Advancement of Learning*, had said<sup>1</sup>, 'The parts of Human Learning have reference to three parts of man's Understanding, which is the seat of learning : History to his Memory, Poesy to his Imagination, and Philosophy to his Reason'<sup>2</sup>. Gurauer remarks that in consequence of this division the English school of thought naturally considered Fancy 'as the common factor' of poetry and painting, and it was from this kind of psychological treatment of the arts that the true principle of ancient art, namely, objective imitation, that is, the reality of the object, was exchanged for the subjective principle of fiction. False Idealism took the place of Nature and Truth, and prepared the way for the confusion of poetry and painting in England, which prevailed when the *Laocoon* was written. The confusion does appear to have existed, but, not long after the publication of the *Laocoon*, it was in a great measure dispelled by high authority, as will be seen in the *Discourses* of Sir Joshua Reynolds, the first of which was delivered in 1769.

The influence of the *Laocoon* in England was much later and slower than on the Continent. The German language was little studied during the last century in this country.

2. There is a peculiar kind of English literature in which we should expect to find early mention of the æsthetic principles laid down in the *Laocoon*. I mean the *Discourses* of the Presidents, and the Lectures of Professors of Painting, in our Royal

<sup>1</sup> Book vi.

<sup>2</sup> ii, 14.

Academy ; a literature, let me observe, in passing, very interesting and instructive, and too much neglected in the present age. Not improbably Johnson and Burke contributed to the lectures of Sir Joshua Reynolds ; but in any event the education of an English gentleman is incomplete without a knowledge of them. The first Discourse of Sir Joshua was delivered in 1769, the last in 1790.

In no Discourse, in no letter or essay, by Sir Joshua is there any reference, I believe, to Lessing. Nevertheless, the reader of the *Laocoon* will often be struck by the resemblance of the canons in that work to those laid down by Sir Joshua. I have referred in the notes to some of them. The reader may not dislike to read in this place some of the passages which bear this character.

'A painter' (writes Sir Joshua in 1771) 'must compensate the natural deficiencies of art. He has but one sentence to utter, but one moment to exhibit'<sup>1</sup>.

'The true test of all the arts is not solely whether the production is a true copy of nature, but whether it answers the end of art, which is to produce a pleasing effect upon the mind'. . . . 'I believe it may be considered as a general rule that no art can be grafted with success on another art'. For though all profess the same origin, and to proceed from the same stock, yet each has its own peculiar modes, both of imitating Nature and of deviating from it, each for the accomplishment of its own particular purpose'<sup>2</sup>.

'I fear *we* (painters) have but very scanty means of exciting those powers over the imagination which make so very considerable a part of poetry. It is a doubt with me whether we should even make the attempt. The chief, if not the only, occasion which the painter has for this artifice, is when the subject is improper to be more fully represented either for the sake of decency, or to avoid what would be disagreeable to be seen ; and this is not to raise or to increase the passions, which is the reason

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, i, 348, 4th Discourse.      <sup>2</sup> See p. 304 of this work.

<sup>3</sup> *Works*, ii, 73, 18th Discourse.

that is given for this practice, but, on the contrary, to diminish their effect'<sup>1</sup>.

'Invention in painting does not imply the invention of the subject, for that is commonly supplied by the poet or historian. With respect to the choice, no subject can be proper that is not generally interesting. It ought to be either some eminent instance of heroic action, or heroic suffering. There must be something either in the action, or in the object, in which men are universally concerned, and which powerfully strikes upon the public sympathy'<sup>2</sup>.

'It is not the eye, it is the mind which the painter of genius desires to address; nor will he waste a moment upon those smaller objects which only serve to catch the sense, to divide the attention, and to counteract his great design of speaking to the heart. This is the ambition which I wish to excite in your minds; and the object I have had in my view throughout this discourse is that one great idea which gives to painting its true dignity, which entitles it to the name of a liberal art, and ranks it as a sister of poetry'<sup>3</sup>.

'Poetry operates by raising our curiosity, engaging the mind by degrees to take an interest in the event, keeping that event suspended, and surprising at last with an unexpected catastrophe.

'The painter's art is more confined, and has nothing that corresponds with, or perhaps is equivalent to, this power and advantage of leading the mind on till attention is totally engaged. What is done by painting must be done at one blow; curiosity has received at once all the satisfaction it can ever have'<sup>4</sup>.

This was written in 1778.

In one respect Sir Joshua differed materially from Lessing: he did not disapprove of allegorical painting<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Works* i, 460, 8th Discourse.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 845, 4th Discourse.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 840, 3rd Discourse.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 439, 8th Discourse.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, i, 420-1, 7th Discourse. Compare Fuseli's *Life*, ii, 197. See p. 112 of this work, where the following note would have been better placed: 'Premettiamo, che di tre fatte esser possono gli Eminentissimi: poichè alcuni sono, che dichiarano la natura, e la cagion delle cose: e questi si chiamano *Fisici*. Altri sono, che racchiudono qualche azione, o favolosa o vera, che sia: e questi si dicono *Istorici*, se l'azione fu vera; o *Mithilogici*, se l'azione fu falsa. Altri final-



It was in 1807 that John Opie read his lectures to the Royal Academy. He does not mention Lessing, but he makes the following observations on the arts of Poetry and Painting :

‘Here, however, it will be proper to remark, that, though from the acknowledged similarity in the principles and effects of these two arts, the one has been called *mute poesy*, and the other *speaking picture*, such is still the very great diversity in their modes and means of exerting their powers, that the study of one can, at best, be considered as a *general* only, and, not at all, as a *technical* help to invention in the other: the roads they take, though parallel, lie as entirely apart, and unconnected, as the senses of hearing and seeing, the different gates by which they enter the mind. The one operates in time, the other in space; the medium of the one is sound, of the other colour; and the force of the one is successive and cumulative, of the other collected and instantaneous. Hence the poet, in *his* treatment of a story, is enabled to bespeak the reader’s favour by a graceful introduction, describing his characters, relating what has already happened, and showing their present situation; and thus preparing him for what is to come, to lead him on step by step with increasing delight, to the full climax of passion and interest; whilst the painter, on the contrary, deprived of all such auxiliary aid, is obligated to depend on the effect of a single moment. That indeed is the critical moment in which all the most striking and beautiful circumstances that can be imagined are concentrated, big with suspense, interest, passion, terror, and action; in short, the moment of explosion, which illuminates and brings at once into view the *past*, *present*, and *future*, and which, when well rendered, is often more than equivalent to all the successive energies of the past.

‘This contrariety in their means, in some degree, separates and limits their fields of operation; and (though there are many subjects equally adapted to both arts) calls, in general, for a different principle in the choice of

them. The most striking beauties, as presented to one sense, being frequently wholly untranslatable into the language of another, it necessarily results that many interesting passages in history and poetry are incapable of affording more than a bald and insipid *representation on canvass*<sup>1</sup>.

In 1813, Dr Copleston published at Oxford his *Praelectiones Academicæ*, in which the philosophy of poetry is treated with the acumen, the grace of style, and admirable Latinity which were among the accomplishments of the distinguished writer. The whole treatise was divided into four parts : *De Imitatione, De Affectibus, De Phantasia, De Judicio*. In the first part he examined the propriety of calling poetry an imitative art ; and, like Lessing, took Homer<sup>2</sup> for his example and authority, speaking of his *ingenii plusquam Prometheus ardor*, by which he had penetrated into the whole domain of nature. The lectures contain a comparison of Poetry with Painting—an enquiry, among other matters, into the proper functions of each, with respect to description, embellished and supported by many citations from the classics. No reference is to be found to Lessing, and I think the *Laocoon* was unknown to him.

Henry Fuseli, or Fuessli, a native of Switzerland, came to England at an early age, and, encouraged by Sir Joshua, devoted himself to painting in this country. He died at the age of eighty-seven, in the year 1825. In 1803 he was elected Professor of Painting to the Royal Academy, an office of which he discharged the duties for twenty years. During this period he published his *Lectures*, which have obtained considerable reputation. His English is not idio-

<sup>1</sup> Opie's *Lectures on Painting* (published 1800). Lecture II, read at the Royal Academy, Feb. 23, 1807, pp. 61-3.

<sup>2</sup> 'Atque ut omittam nunc dicere de variis scribendi formis, quales sunt Epica Lyrica Dramatica aut de styli varietate, de ipsa re ac materia videamus, quantum inter partes sit discrimen quæ sensibus nostris oblectamentum pariunt. Quod ne in infinitum excuriamus *Unius Homeri firmatum est exemplo*', etc. Prael. 2, p. 17.

matic or pure, and is often turgid, but not without force and fire. Of German he was a complete master—one consequence of which was that, first of English Professors of Painting, he did full justice by name to Lessing's *Laocoon*, upon the principles of which his third lecture 'on Invention' is in great measure founded. It opens with a reference to Simonides and Plutarch, and observes

'that as Poetry and Painting resemble each other in their uniform address to the senses, for the impression they mean to make on our fancy, and by that on our mind, so they differ as essentially in their *materials* and in their modes of application, which are regulated by the diversity of the organs which they address, ear and eye. *Successive action* communicated by sound and *time* are the medium of poetry: *form* displayed in *space* and momentaneous energy are the elements of painting'<sup>1</sup>.

Professor Phillips succeeded to the chair of Fuseli in 1824, and in one of his very eloquent lectures shows himself to have been imbued with the principles of the *Laocoon*, though he does not refer to the work, and probably knew them only through the medium of Fuseli's *Lecture on Invention*.

'It is scarcely possible', Phillips says, 'to consider the quality and the object of invention, as employed by the painter, without reference to its influence in poetry. There is an unity of object in the minds of the poet and the painter, which gives a near degree of affinity to the arts they profess when employed upon the illustration of history or the productions of fancy; they differ only in their varied means. One spirit actuates them, one power directs them to the same end; their course only is different, as are the agents through whose means they act upon the different organs of our senses, the eye, and the ear.

'The greatest and most important effort required of invention in either of those arts, is the selection of that which best relates, adorns, and elevates the subject chosen; or the separation of that which is essential,

<sup>1</sup> Fuseli, *Works*, vol. iii, pp. 133-4; ed. Knowles, 1831.

which gives vitality to it from the ordinary matter accompanying all mundane things.

‘Under what regulation the painter or the poet may select from among those visions of his imagination which are calculated to elevate, or to give to his subject the air of ideal character, or of refinement demanded by his fancy, remains a matter of taste; but one thing is clear, the basis of his means for the fulfilment of his desire must be sought for on earth, and he must elevate the matter as he may; with constant reference to nature. A character understood by human beings must be maintained in the vision; and, however small the portions, it will be the leading principle in the mind of the reader of the poem, or the observer of the picture.

‘Though both the poet and the painter are confined in their compositions to this principle of reference to nature, the poet is infinitely the most unrestrained of the two. The instrument he employs, and the organ he addresses, require far less of materiality than is demanded of the painter; and numberless are the instances in which the privilege has been successfully indulged’<sup>1</sup>.

During the last half century a knowledge of German has become very general in this country. Mr Lewes<sup>2</sup> says ‘Macaulay told me that the reading of this little book (the *Laocoon*) formed an epoch in his mental history, and that he learned more from it than he had ever learned elsewhere’.

3. The *Laocoon* was translated into English by Mr Ross in 1836. Mr De Quincey’s eloquent paraphrase of a part of the *Laocoon* will be found in the twelfth volume of his works. Mr Beasley’s translation appeared in 1859, and one by an American lady, Miss Frothingham, appeared first in Boston, and afterwards in London, during this year<sup>3</sup>.

That there are still in this country many educated persons capable of appreciating the *Laocoon*, but reluctant to take the trouble of reading it in German, I am satisfied. Not long ago I suggested

<sup>1</sup> Phillips’s *Lectures on Painting* (1833), pp. 194–196.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Goethe*, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> 1874.

the perusal of a German book to a highly educated man, adding, 'I suppose you read German?'. He said, 'Yes, but I prefer reading a translation'. It may, indeed, be not unreasonably asked why another English translation should appear? To which the answer must be, however unsatisfactory, that I had nearly finished this translation before I could obtain a copy of Mr Beasley's work, and quite finished it before the American translation reached me: and it seemed to me that a translation with a preface and notes, and which was not confined to the first part of the *Laocoon*, but included the fragments of the unfinished parts, which have not yet, I believe, been translated into English, might still be acceptable to the public, and conduce in a humble degree to a better acquaintance with Lessing's great work. I hope I have not incurred the censure of Don Quixote, and shown, as he says bad translators are apt to do, the wrong side of the tapestry<sup>1</sup>.

## SECTION IV

1. Poetry in its relation to the Drama, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*;
2. Poetry in its relation to Music.

1. Lessing might have been satisfied that he had laid down sound æsthetical principles on the respective boundaries of Poetry and Painting when he published his essay on the *Laocoon*; but he knew that he had not exhausted even this subject, while he had left almost untouched others intimately connected with it. First, poetry in the form of the drama required a fuller consideration, both generally and as compared with painting;

<sup>1</sup> Don Quixote, t. iv, cap. cxv. 330; ed. Madrid, 1777. The German edition of the *Laocoon* which I have used was published at Berlin, 1839.

secondly, these arts had not been treated in their relation to, and in comparison with, the science of sound and the art of music<sup>1</sup>.

The defect as to the former subject was in a great measure supplied by a very remarkable, though now much forgotten, publication. The first number of the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* appeared on the 1st of May 1767<sup>2</sup>. It reached 104 numbers, and the last appeared, I believe, on the 19th of April 1768. The work consisted of weekly Papers on the drama and dramatic literature published at Hamburg. The title was taken from an Italian work entitled *Dramaturgia*, written at the beginning of the 16th century by Leo Allatius or Leoni Alacci. In these vigorous essays Lessing let loose all his wrath against the French dramatists and the French stage<sup>3</sup>. If tragedy was the highest form of dramatic poetry, by that standard the French, he maintained, had no theatre. He treated with merciless severity the pretensions of Voltaire, then the unworthy idol of Europe, to be an historian, or a dramatic poet; and he maintained that the principle upon which Corneille wrote tragedy was thoroughly rotten and false<sup>4</sup>. He threw over with might and main the French worship of the three unities of place, time, and action, and confined, with a vehemence which went perhaps beyond its mark, the drama within the unity of action<sup>5</sup>. He dwelt on the extraordinary merits and genius of Shakespere. But he did more. 'The *Laocoon* is the work' (says Gervinus)<sup>6</sup> 'which by one blow

<sup>1</sup> 'Dryden's Musical Pictures.'

<sup>2</sup> Goedeke, *Grundriss 2. Gesch. d. deutschen Dichtung*, 2. 615. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Stahr's *Lessing*, 324, Kap. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Stahr, 338.

<sup>5</sup> It is remarkable that neither Manzoni, in his admirable letter to Monsieur Chauvet, 'Sur l'unité de temps et de lieu dans la Tragédie', nor Goethe in his approving reviews of Manzoni's *Carmagnola* and *Adelchi*, should refer to Lessing's *Dramaturgie*; Manzoni's proposition being that unity of action was alone necessary (*Opere, &c. di Manzoni*, p. 95, Paris, 1843). Goethe, *Werke*, 38. 253. 305. Goethe speaks, however, of the principle as well known in Germany.

<sup>6</sup> *Gesch. der deutschen Lit.* 4. 399.

set us free from the yoke of French bondage, and which called forth the energy, the life, and the depth of our national literature. It was the polar star of the future poets of Germany'.

At present we are only concerned with these essays in their relation to the *Laocoon*. 'If you wish', observes Gurauer<sup>1</sup>, 'to find a parallel in the former works of Lessing to the *Dramaturgie*, both with respect to the form and the depths of the discussions, the *Laocoon* presents itself to you for this purpose. As the laws of the plastic arts and of poetry, especially of epic poetry, were in the *Laocoon* the object of his inquiry, so in the *Dramaturgie* are the laws of dramatic poetry, especially of tragedy'. The transition from the one to the other was natural. In the same way as there is no formal proposition of the schools laid down as the basis of the *Laocoon*, from which laws and ideas arose in a complete symmetrical system, inasmuch as they arose from the consideration of a single work of art, and wandered into various paths in order to arrive at general results; so the *Dramaturgie* was not intended to be a teacher's book on a dramatic system; but certain pieces, not always the best, considered together, were examined and used for the purpose of throwing light upon certain contested or obscure questions without arriving at a complete resolution of them. But they were to be considered only as thoughts, the chief value of which was to stimulate the reader to think for himself. Nevertheless, the course taken by the critic was different in the two works.

'In the *Laocoon* his principal object was to discover the law of the plastic arts—first as compared with Poetry by speculative abstractions, chiefly taken from Homer and the principal works of antiquity. This was not the object of the *Dramaturgie*. Lessing was of opinion that the *codex dramaticus* was not to seek, but was found; it

existed in the *Poetics* of Aristotle. Lessing had no reverence for merely great names or consecrated authorities. "If that were all", he said<sup>1</sup>, "I would make short work of Aristotle"; but it is because his canons and propositions as to the drama exactly agreed with those of Lessing; because, after studying the drama for many years, he was convinced that you could not take a step in an opposite direction from the rules of Aristotle's *Poetics* without taking a step in the opposite direction to perfection. Pointing with his finger, as it were, to Shakspeare, Lessing laid down in his *Dramaturgie* canons for the German drama, even as in his *Laocoon* he had furnished canons for the theory and practice of art and poetry. *Laocoon* sufficed for the latter; Homer and Milton, Sophocles and Shakspeare, for the former'.

2. Now as to the second point, namely, the relation of Music to Poetry. Herder, who trembled unnecessarily for the fate of all lyrical and epic poetry, as undermined by the principles of the *Laocoon*<sup>2</sup>, wrote upon this work his first important criticism; and complained of the want in it of a comparison and juxtaposition of Music and Poetry.

He did not know that Lessing intended to deal fully with this theme—which he afterwards touched upon in his *Dramaturgie*—in the second part of his *Laocoon*, for which we have only a few notes, and 'with a depth and comprehensiveness', says one of his biographers<sup>3</sup>, 'which Herder never imagined'. It appears, from an anecdote related by Gurauer, that Lessing was not able to endure a musical performance of any length, especially of *sonatas*, and that, after a certain time, he was obliged to rush out into the air in order to breathe freely. How far, if at all, this curious physical fact in his constitution might have influenced his opinion on the subject we cannot tell, but there are many reasons for lamenting that Lessing never completed his

<sup>1</sup> Ib. 171.

<sup>2</sup> Gurauer, ii, 76.

<sup>3</sup> Stahr, ii, 347.  
20 of this work.

see also Gurauer, ii, 347; i, 12, 67, and see pp. 316-



*Laocoon*; and especially we must regret that we are deprived of a treatise by him on the relation of music to poetry and the plastic arts.

He well knew that an investigation of the common bond which united them all was one of the most interesting subjects of philosophy, both with respect to its moral results and to the mutual working and influence of each art upon the other. He knew too, and perhaps this was his peculiar merit, that the subject ought to be considered not merely as a cold abstraction, but in its relation to daily actual life; the finest needs of which had called the arts into existence, and made them one of the noblest vocations of man.

He knew that from a keen perception and critical observance of their mutual affinities had been derived the doctrine both of the beautiful and the ideal, which had animated the unrivalled creations of the great philosophers, poets, and artists of Greece, and led to a recognition of a divine origin in the inspirations of Homer and Pindar.

He knew how important a part in the education and elevation of man the art of music had played, not only in the wide signification which it obtained among the ancients, but in the much narrower and more restricted signification of modern times; and though he could hardly have anticipated the position which it has assumed in the present system of education, he would scarcely have approved of the statement that 'music, as distinguished from the various rude attempts of the past, is only about 400 years old'<sup>1</sup>.

The great Italian work by Doni<sup>2</sup>, written about the beginning of the seventeenth century, has been said, by competent authority, to have sounded the depths of ancient Greek music, both theoretical and practical, vocal and instrumental, and to have brought to light and compared every classical

<sup>1</sup> *Music and Morals*, by Rev. H. R. Haweis, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Tiraboschi, *Storia della Lett. Ital.* vol. viii, pp. lvi. lvii.

authority upon the subject. Nevertheless it is probable that a treatise by Lessing on the science of sound and the art of music would have given us another occasion for admiring his immense erudition, the vigour of his criticism, and the clearness of his conclusions, while he brought to our knowledge, in his own way and after his own fashion, what Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, Quintilian, Aristides Quintilian, and St Augustine, had said upon the subject; and not only with respect to antiquity, but with regard to modern times, he would have known how 'to clear the whole matter with good distinctions and decisions'<sup>1</sup>.

We should have had the advantage of his great critical faculty in the investigation and appreciation of the theories of modern writers, so far as they had then been developed. He would have passed in review before us opinions of Doni, Martini, Webb, Harris, Du Bos, upon the once much vexed question as to whether and to what extent music is to be considered as an imitative art; he would have dwelt upon the distinction between the power of music to affect the mind by direct and by indirect imitation, and especially with reference to the difference in this respect between vocal and instrumental music. We should have had his opinion upon the propositions of Webb<sup>2</sup>, which were probably suggested by Mengs, that while painting and sculpture produce their effect simply as imitative arts, music has the double character of an art of impression as well as of imitation, that the passions are to be traced by their internal movement, or external signs, that the musician first catches the movement of the passions as they spring from the soul, the painter waits till they take the form of action, the poet possesses the advantages of both and embraces in his imitations the movement and the effect. And then what illustrations he would

<sup>1</sup> Bacon, *Of Church Controversies*.

<sup>2</sup> *On Poetry and Music*, p. 28.

have drawn from Shakspeare, whom he so thoroughly appreciated, and who is pre-eminently the poet of music.

There is one portion of this subject on which we should have listened with especial interest to his remarks, namely, the origin and progress of those theatrical representations in which the charms of music and poetry were intended to be combined. He who knew Milton so well might have taken for the text of his lectures on this subject

And ever against eating cares,  
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,  
Married to immortal verse,  
Such as the meeting soul may pierce  
In notes, with many a winding bout  
Of linked sweetness long drawn out,  
With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,  
The melting voice through mazes running,  
Untwisting all the chains that tie  
The hidden soul of harmony.

What would he have said upon this 'marriage' of Music and Poetry as shown in the gorgeous representations which arose out of the prodigious magnificence of the Medici feasts at Florence, towards the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century, and which offered to Italy 'the first apparition of a new art'?<sup>1</sup> This music, founded upon a careful study of the treatises of Greek music brought into Italy after the capture of Constantinople, faithfully noted the accent, the quantity, without symmetrical rhythm or regular measure, and was in fact a declamation rendered more pathetic by appreciable sounds and vocal charms; this 'canto recitativo', 'chant recitatif', eventually losing its adjective, became, as a substantive, the 'recitative' of the then new Italian opera.<sup>2</sup>

It would have been interesting to hear his opinion on the probable future effect of this class of musical

<sup>1</sup> Ginguené, pt. 6, ch. xxvi.

<sup>2</sup> *Della Storia e della Ragione d' ogni Poesia*, etc., di F. S. Quadrio, vol. v, p. 427, lib. iii, Dist. iv, cap. 1. *Dove dell' Origine e dell' Antichità dei Musicali Drammi si parla*; ed. Milano, 1744.

representation on poetry. Would he have forestalled the opinion of great modern critics? Would he have foreseen that this music would end in debasing poetry, and, having been her handmaid, would become her tyrannical mistress<sup>1</sup>; and that 'the poet would be hampered by the composer and the composer by the poet?'<sup>2</sup>. That poetry and music were both great arts, but greater alone than in company? Or would he have pronounced their union happy and natural, their separation unhappy and unnatural? Would he have agreed with Du Bos that music was invented to give increased force to poetry?<sup>3</sup>.

Then, as to the imitative character of music, would he have said, with Harris<sup>4</sup>, that the genuine charm of music, and the wonders which it works, are due, not to its powers of imitation, which lie within a narrow range and are of little comparative efficacy, but to its power of raising the affections; and that the ideas of the poet make the most sensible impressions when the affections to which he appeals have been already excited by music? It is then that he

pectus inaniter angit,  
Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,  
Ut magus<sup>5</sup>

It seems to me most probable that he would have

<sup>1</sup> Hallam, ii, 153.

<sup>2</sup> Haweis, 28.

<sup>3</sup> 'Il nous reste à parler de la Musique, comme du troisième des moyens que les hommes ont inventés pour donner une nouvelle force à la Poésie, et pour la mettre en état de faire sur nous une plus grande impression. Ainsi que le Peintre imite les traits et les couleurs de la nature, de même le Musicien imite les tons, les accens, les soupirs, les inflexions de voix, enfin tous ces sons, à l'aide desquels la nature même exprime ses sentimens et ses passions. Tous ces sons, comme nous l'avons déjà exposé ont une force merveilleuse pour nous émouvoir, parcequ'ils sont les signes des passions, institués par la nature dont ils ont reçu leur énergie; au lieu que les mots articulés ne sont que des signes arbitraires des passions. Les mots articulés ne tirent leur signification et leur valeur que de l'institution des hommes, qui n'ont pu leur donner cours que dans un certain pays'. Du Bos, *Réflexions critiques sur la Poésie et sur la Peinture*, vol. i, pp. 466, 467.

<sup>4</sup> *Discourse on Music, Painting, and Poetry*, pp. 99, 100.

<sup>5</sup> Hor. *Ep.* l. 1. 2.

anticipated the more modern judgments on the question whether music, by certain sounds alone, moves the passions or affects the general mental disposition, without presenting any distinct image to the mind and without the aid of words; and that it was only in the ancient sense of music, including within its wide scope a recitative in language, and in connection with the drama, that music could properly be called an imitative art<sup>1</sup>.

Because, though music might imitate natural sounds of the inanimate world, such as the Hail-stone Chorus, the imitations of the wind, the thunder, and the sea, by Handel, or sounds of the animate world, such as the songs of birds, according to Lucretius<sup>2</sup>, or of the human kind, like sounds of joy and grief and anguish; yet these are imitations of so secondary and subordinate a kind, when compared with the great power of music in other respects, as not to justify the application of the term imitative to the art in general<sup>3</sup>.

It was early in the nineteenth century that Mr Twining became acquainted, through a French translation, with the *Dramaturgie* of Lessing, and, in his own admirable translation of, and dissertation upon, Aristotle's poetry, Twining remarks upon the many 'excellent and uncommon things' which Lessing's work contained, regretting that he had not written a regular commentary upon Aristotle's works<sup>4</sup>. I think Lessing would have approved of his admirer's observation upon the present subject.

'With respect to modern writers', Twining says, 'at least, there seems to be a manifest impropriety in denominating music an imitative art, while they confine the

<sup>1</sup> For a very ingenious and learned disquisition on the sense in which Aristotle in his *Poetics* used *μιμήσις*, and the difference on this subject between him and Plato, the reader is referred to a little tract, *De Μιμήσει*, etc., by G. Abeken, Göttingen, 1836.

<sup>2</sup> 'At liquidas avium voces imitatur ore', etc. Lucret., lib. v, 1378.

<sup>3</sup> Harris, *Discourse on Music, Painting, and Poetry*, p. 68, note.

<sup>4</sup> Twining's *Aristotle, Treat. on Poetry*, with two Dissertations on Poetical and Musical Imitations. Ed. 1812, p. xxxi.

application of the term imitative to what they confess to be the slightest and least important of all its powers. In this view consistency and propriety are, certainly, on the side of Dr Beattie, when he would "strike music off the list of imitative arts"<sup>1</sup>. But, perhaps, even a farther reform may justly be considered as wanting in our language upon this subject. With whatever propriety, and however naturally and obviously, the arts both of music and of poetry may be separately and occasionally regarded and spoken of as imitative, yet, when we arrange and class the arts, it seems desirable that a clearer language were adopted. The notion that painting, poetry, and music are all arts of imitation, certainly tends to produce, and has produced, much confusion. That they all in some sense of the word or other imitate, cannot be denied; but the senses of the word, when applied to poetry or music, are so different both from each other, and from that in which it is applied to painting, sculpture, and the arts of design in general—the only arts that are obviously and essentially imitative—that when we include them all, without distinction, under the same general denomination of imitative arts, we seem to defeat the only useful purpose of all classing and arrangement; and, instead of producing order and method in our ideas, produce only embarrassment and confusion'<sup>2</sup>.

The common bond, if these remarks be just, which unites Poetry, Painting, and Music, would not be the principle of mere imitation, but the common property which each art, properly cultivated, possesses of affecting the emotions, raising the imagination, and directing heart and mind to the contemplation of the sublime'<sup>3</sup>.

'These arts in their highest province', says Sir J. Reynolds, 'are not addressed to the gross senses, but to the desires of the mind, to that spark of divinity which we have within, impatient of being circumscribed and pent up by the world which is about us'<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 91-3.

<sup>3</sup> See Gervinus, 4, 64, as to Breitinger's, Lessing's forerunner's, opinion on this point.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. II, 78 13th Discourse.

Lessing would probably have admitted that music was the universal language of man, but he would, I think, have assigned to poetry, especially dramatic poetry, pre-eminence over music as well as painting — would have agreed with the modern author of the *Epilogue to Lessing's Laocoon* :

They speak ! the happiness divine  
 They feel, runs o'er in every line.  
 Its spell is round them like a shower ;  
 It gives them pathos, gives them power.  
 No painter yet hath such a way  
 Nor no musician, made, as they ;  
 And gather'd on immortal knolls  
 Such lovely flowers for cheering souls !  
 Beethoven, Raphael, cannot reach  
 The charm which Homer, Shakspeare, teach.  
 To these, to these, their thankful race  
 Gives, then, the first, the fairest place !  
 And brightest is their glory's sheen,  
 For greatest has their labour been <sup>1</sup>.

## SECTION V

1. Notice of some defects in Lessing ; 2. Lessing's censure of descriptive Poetry considered ; 3. Lessing's account of himself.

1. It is a defect in Lessing<sup>2</sup> not to have recognised or understood the effect of Christian life and teaching upon the art of Painting ; and the defect is the more remarkable as with respect to the art of Poetry he was fully aware of the merit of the *romantic* poetry of Milton and Shakspeare, as compared with the *classical* poetry. To this defect is traceable a certain hardness of tone, as if the standard of ancient art was the only standard, a hardness which by degrees Herder and Schiller softened and overcame. They recognised the claims of the modern or romantic school in poetry, architecture, painting especially, and landscape painting, which latter Winkelmann and Lessing greatly underrated, but

<sup>1</sup> *Poems* by Matthew Arnold, p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> Gurauer, ii, 67.

which the *Kosmos* of Humboldt restored to its proper place.

Lessing makes, as it were, only one bound from the age of the ancients to the age of the moderns. He takes no cognizance of that long intervening period which we call the Middle Ages. Yet in these ages the seed of modern culture, art, and poetry was sown. And for a long period pictures<sup>1</sup> were the books of the people, according to Gregory the Great's well-known remark, 'quod legentibus scriptura, hoc idiotis præstat pictura cernentibus, etc.'<sup>2</sup>.

The mediæval pictures as well as the mediæval religious edifices strove to attain expression of sentiment as their highest, and indeed only, end. And the mediæval painter while he sought out this end, out of regard to the common people clothed his figures: he, moreover, introduced allegory into his picture in order to teach the fact of Scripture history.

2. One of the biographers of Lessing observes, 'Since we have had Lessing's *Laocoon* it has become the A B C of poetry that the poet should not paint'<sup>3</sup>. And it has no doubt been a common remark that a death blow was given by Lessing to what is called descriptive poetry<sup>4</sup>. Not the less fatal a blow because he who dealt it had in his early life written in praise of Thomson's *Seasons*.

This seems to me to be an error. It is true that a Dutch painter, to use the illustration of Lessing<sup>5</sup>, will give a better idea of a flower by his picture of it than a poet can do by descriptive verses, though even this proposition with regard to a single object is not universal. Mackintosh<sup>6</sup> asks what Chinese could paint a butterfly better than Spenser:

<sup>1</sup> 'Die alte Welt ist nicht schroff von der neueren geschieden': 'There is no abrupt line of severance between the old and the new world'; Humboldt observes, *Kosmos*, ii, 26.

<sup>2</sup> S. Greg. *Registr. Epist.* lit. xi, Indict. iv, Ep. xiii, ed. Paris, 1705.

<sup>3</sup> Stahr, 242.

<sup>4</sup> Preface to *Minna von Barnhelm*, by Dr Buchhelm, p. 84.

<sup>5</sup> P. 142.

<sup>6</sup> Mackintosh's *Memoirs*, ii, 246.



The velvet nap which on his wings doth lie,  
The silken down with which his back is dight,  
His broad outstretched horns, his hairy thighs,  
His glorious colours, and his glistening eyes!

Take also this single image :

His station like the herald Mercury,  
New lighted on a heaven kissing hill<sup>1</sup>.

Is John of Bologna better than this?

But in any case it is not true that a painter can always give a better representation of scenery, whether at sea or on land, than a poet. And here it must be observed that if the maxim were true it would apply to all descriptions by words, whether in prose or poetry.

The proposition is surely much too broadly stated. That a mere catalogue or enumeration, even with distinctive epithets, of a series of natural objects, does not convey a picture to the mind, may be safely maintained<sup>2</sup>. But the writer who makes a happy choice of various natural objects, who, grouping them so as the imagination shall represent them, avails himself of his powers to bring them forward in *succession*, may often surpass the painter, who must exhibit his scene *at once*. Homer<sup>3</sup>, I think, deserves Lucian's title of being the best of painters, whether of landscape or of sea, as of men and actions; though indignation of Pope's false and meretricious version, ascribing to Homer puny epithets and descriptive words which he did not employ, has given rise perhaps to a contrary opinion.

I venture to offer some examples in poetry and prose in support of my proposition. First as to landscape. Take Homer's unsurpassed moonlight scene<sup>4</sup>:

Οἱ δὲ, μέγα φρονέοντες, ἐπὶ πτολέμοιο γεφύρας  
Εἶατο παννύχιοι· πυρὰ δὲ σφίσι καίετο πολλὰ.

<sup>1</sup> *Hamlet*, act iii, sc. 4.      <sup>2</sup> Copleston, *Prael.* iv.; Twining, 44, etc.  
<sup>3</sup> See Ch. XI, Note 2, of this work.      <sup>4</sup> *Il.* © 549-55.

‘Ὡς δ’ ὅτ’ ἐν οὐρανῷ ἄστρο φαεινὴν ἀμφὶ σελήνην  
φαίνεται’ ἀριπρεπέα, ὅτε τ’ ἐπλετο νήνεμος αἰθήρ,  
‘Ἐκ τ’ ἔφανε πᾶσαι σκοπιαί, καὶ πρόωνες ἄκροι,  
καὶ νάπαι· οὐρανόθεν δ’ ἄρ’ ὑπερβράγη ἄσπετος αἰθήρ,  
πάντα δέ τ’ εἶδεται ἄστρο· γέγηθε δέ τε φρένα ποιμήν<sup>1</sup>.

Truly does Lessing say ‘All the masterpieces of Homer were older than any masterpiece of art : for Homer had looked at nature with the eye of a painter long before Phidias and Apelles’<sup>2</sup>.

Take a scene which no Claude can rival, in which Aeneas’s entrance into the Tiber is described by Virgil<sup>3</sup> :

Jamque rubescebat radiis mare, et aethere ab alto  
Aurora in roseis fulgebat lutea bigis ;  
Quum venti posuere, omnisque repente resedit.  
Flatus, et in lento luctantur marinores tonsae.  
Atque hic Aeneas ingentem ex aequore lucum  
Prospicit. Hunc inter fluvio Tiberinus amoeno,  
Vorticibus rapidis, et multa flavus arena  
In mare prorumpit. Varias circumque supraque  
Assuetas ripis volucres et fluminis alveo  
Aethera mulcebant cantu, Iuocoque volabant<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pope’s translation, with ‘his swain blessing the *useful* light’, is as feeble as old Chapman’s is vigorous :

And spent all night in open field : fires round about them shined  
As when about the silver moon, when air is free from wind,  
And stars shine clear : to whose sweet beams high prospect and the  
brows

Of all steep hills and pinnacles thrust up themselves for shows ;  
And even the lowly valleys joy to glitter in their sight,  
And the unmeasured firmament bursts to disclose her light,  
And all the signs in heaven are seen that glad the shepherd’s heart.

<sup>2</sup> See Ch. XVIII, *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> Virg., *Aeneid*, lib. vii, 25-34.

<sup>4</sup> Now, when the rosy morn began to rise,  
And wav’d her saffron streamer thro’ the skies,  
When Thetis blush’d in purple, not her own,  
And from her face the breathing winds were blown,  
A sudden silence sat upon the sea;  
And sweeping oars, with struggling, urge their way.  
The Trojan, from the main, beheld a wood,  
Which thick with shades, and a brown horror, stood :  
Betwixt the trees the Tiber took his course,  
With whirlpools dimpl’d ; and with downward force  
That drove the sand along, he took his way  
And roll’d his yellow billows to the sea.

Similar features of natural beauty made a deep impression on Columbus as he sailed along the coast of Cuba, between the small Lucayan Islands and the Jardinillos. This great man speaks of the wonderful aspect of the vegetation, in which the leaves and flowers belonging to each stem were scarcely distinguishable, and of the rose-coloured flamingoes fishing at the mouths of the rivers in the early morning, and animating the landscape <sup>1</sup>.

Then as to the ocean. What painter can rival Homer's painting of the sea? <sup>2</sup>

‘Ὡς δ’ ὅτ’ ἐν αἰγιαλῷ πολυηχέϊ κῦμα θαλάσσης  
 Ὀρνυτ’ ἐπασσύτερον, Ζεφύρου ὑποκινήσαντος·  
 Πόντῳ μὲν τὰ πρῶτα κορύσσεται, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα  
 Χέρσῳ ῥηγνύμενον μεγάλα βρέμει, ἀμφὶ δέ τ’ ἄκρας  
 Κυρτὸν ἐδὼ κορυφούται, ἀποπτύει ὃ ἄλδς ἄχνην <sup>3</sup>

Or take Virgil's excellent copy <sup>4</sup>

Fluctus uti medio coepit cum albescere ponto,  
 Longius ex altoque sinum trahit : utque, volutus  
 Ad terras, immane sonat per saxa, neque ipso  
 Monte minor procumbit : at una exaestuat unda  
 Vorticibus, nigranque alte subjectat arenam <sup>5</sup>

About him, and above, and round the wood,  
 The birds that haunt the borders of his flood,  
 That bathed within, or back'd upon his side,  
 To tuneful songs their narrow throats applied.

DRYDEN'S *Virgil*, book vii, 35-49.

<sup>1</sup> *Kosmos*, ii, 56.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.*, Δ 422.

<sup>3</sup> And as when with the west wind flaws the sea thrusts up her waves,

One after other, thick and high, upon the groaning shores :  
 First in herself loud, but opposed with banks and rocks, she roars,  
 And all her back in bristles set, spits everyway her foam.

CHAPMAN.

<sup>4</sup> *Georg.*, iii, 237.

<sup>5</sup> Not more with madness, rolling from afar,  
 The spumy waves proclaim the watery war,  
 And mounting upwards, with a mighty roar,  
 March onwards, and insult the rocky shore.  
 They mate the middle region with their height,  
 And fall no less than with a mountain's weight ;  
 The waters boil, and belching from below,  
 Black sands, as from a forceful engine, throw.—DRYDEN.

Magnificent as Homer's storm is, I do not fear to place Shakspeare's in comparison :

Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast  
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains  
In cradle of the rude imperious surge ;  
And in the visitation of the winds,  
Who take the ruffian billows by the top,  
Curling their monstrous heads, and hanging them  
With deafening clamours in the slippery clouds,  
That, with the hurly, death itself awakes ?<sup>1</sup>

Take a modern poet's description<sup>2</sup> :

London hissed the sea beneath her lee—my little boat flew fast,  
But faster still the rushing storm came borne upon the blast.  
Lord ! what a roaring hurricane beset the straining sail !  
What furious sleet, with level drift, and fierce assaults of hail !  
What darksome caverns yawn'd before !, what jagged steep's behind !  
Like battle steeds, with foamy manes, wild tossing in the wind,  
Each after each sank down astern, exhausted in the chase,  
But where it sank another rose and galloped in its place ;  
As black as night—they turned to white, and cast against the cloud  
A snowy sheet, as if each surge upturned a sailor's shroud.

What painting can place such a picture of a sea-storm before the mind as is placed by the description of these poets ?

Turn to the gentler image of a landscape, possessing all the picturesque features of which a cultivated country is susceptible, and listen to Lucretius<sup>3</sup> :

Inque dies magis in montem succedere sylvas  
Cogebant, infique locum concedere cultis :  
Prata, lacus, rivos, segotes, vineque laeta  
Collibus, et campis ut haberent, atque olearum  
Caerula distinguens inter plaga currere posset  
Per tumulos, et convalles, camposque profusa :  
Ut nunc esse vides vario distincta lepore  
Omnia, quae pomis intersita dulcibus ornant,  
Arbustisque tenent felicibus obsita circum<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Henry IV*, pt. II, act iii, scene I.

<sup>2</sup> Hood, *The Demon Ship*.

<sup>3</sup> Lib. v, 1369-1377.

<sup>4</sup> These beautiful lines are about to lose much of their charm in my translation :

And day by day unto the mountain-top  
The wood receded, and the valleys smiled  
With culture. Meadows, pools and rivers,  
Corn and glad vines, and olives with a band  
Of grey-blue foliage climb, and mark their course

Juvenal's picture of the Egerian grot affords another illustration<sup>1</sup>:

In vallem Egeriae descendimus et speluncas  
Dissimiles veris. Quanto praestantius esset  
Nunten aquae, viridi si margine clauderet undas  
Herba, nec ingenuum violarent marmora tophum?<sup>2</sup>

So Ovid's Valley and Cave of Diana<sup>3</sup>:

Vallis erat, picis et acuta densa cupressu,  
Nomine Gargaphie, succinctae sacra Dianae;  
Cujus in extremo est antrum nemorale recessu,  
Arte laboratum nulla; simulaverat artem  
Ingenio natura suo; nam pumice vivo,  
Et levibus tophis navitum duxerat arcum.  
Fons sonat à dextra, tenui perlucidus unda,  
Margine gramineo patulos incinctus hiatus.  
Hic Dea silvarum, venatu fessa, solebat  
Virgineas artus liquido perfundere rore<sup>4</sup>

And again his Hymettus<sup>5</sup>:

Spread over knoll and valley. All around  
Smiles with a varied grace, while flowering shrubs,  
Apples, and fruit-trees beautify the ground.

<sup>1</sup> Juvenalis *Satirae*, Sat. iii, 17.

<sup>2</sup> Thence slowly winding down the vale, we view  
The Egerian grot—ah, how unlike the true!  
Nymph of the Spring! more honour'd hadst thou been,  
If, free from art, an edge of living green  
Thy bubbling fount had circumscribed alone,  
And marble ne'er profaned the native stone.

GIFFORD'S *Juvenal*, Sat. iii, 27.

<sup>3</sup> Ovid, *Met.*, lib. iii, 155.

<sup>4</sup> Down in a vale with pine and cypress clad,  
Refresh'd with gentle winds, and brown with shade  
The chaste Diana's private haunt there stood,  
Full in the centre of the darksome wood,  
A spacious grotto, all around o'ergrown  
With hoary moss, and arch'd with pumice-stone  
From out its rocky clefts the waters flow,  
And trickling swell into the lake below.  
Nature had everywhere so play'd her part,  
That everywhere she seemed to vie with art.

ADDISON, in Garth's *Ovid*, p. 357.

<sup>5</sup> Ovid, *Arte Amandi*, lib. iii, 687-694.

Now, where his purple head Hymettus shews  
And flow'ring hills, a sacred fountain flows,  
With soft and verdant turf the soil is spread  
And sweetly-smelling shrubs the ground o'ershade.

Est prope purpureos colles florentis Hymetti  
Fons sacer, et viridi caespite mollis humus.  
Silva nemus non alta facit; tegit arbutus herbam,  
Ros maris, et lauri, nigraque myrtus olent;  
Nec densae foliis buxi, fragilesque myricae,  
Nec tenues cytisi, cultaque pinus abest.  
Lenibus impulsae Zephyris auraque salubri  
Tot generum frondes, herbaque summa tremunt.

I pass by the pictures to be found in the pastoral epics of Theocritus and in the Greek Tragedians, such as the picture of Colonos<sup>1</sup> in Sophocles, and those in the *Ion*<sup>2</sup> and the *Bacchae*<sup>3</sup> of Euripides, Aelian's vale of Tempe,<sup>4</sup> with the detailed description of natural scenery, in which he uses the remarkable expressions, *διαγράφωμεν καὶ διαπλάσωμεν*, *depingamus atque effingamus*: 'Let us paint and let us mould'. For the Greeks<sup>5</sup>, though they did not cultivate according to our modern ideas, as a distinct branch of æsthetics, the art of describing natural scenery, though they had not the counterpart of our word 'picturesque'<sup>6</sup>, and were less occupied with describing the phenomena of inanimate nature

There, rosemary and bays their odours join,  
And with the fragrant myrtle's scent combine,  
There, tamarisks with thick-leav'd box are found,  
And cytisus, and garden-pines, abound.  
While thro' the boughs, soft winds of Zephyr pass,  
Trenble the leaves and tender tops of grass.

DRYDEN, in *Garth's Ovid*.

<sup>1</sup> *Oed. Col.* 668, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Ion*, 82.

<sup>3</sup> *Bacchae*, 1045.

<sup>4</sup> *i.* 191.

<sup>5</sup> See the first and second chapters of the second volume of Humboldt's *Kosmos*.

<sup>6</sup> 'The feelings of satisfaction which result from the joint energy of the understanding and phantasy, are principally those of beauty and sublimity; and the judgments which pronounce an object to be sublime, beautiful, &c., are called by a metaphorical expression *Judgments of Taste*. These have also been styled *Æsthetical Judgments*; and the term *æsthetical* has now, especially among the philosophers of Germany, nearly superseded the term *taste*. Both terms are unsatisfactory. The gratification we feel in the beautiful, the sublime, the picturesque, &c., is purely contemplative, that is, the feeling of pleasure which we then experience, arises solely from the consideration of the object and altogether apart from any desire of, or satisfaction in, its possession'. SIR W. HAMILTON, *Lectures on Metaphysics*: Lect. XLVI. Compare Sir J. Reynolds, vol. ii, 78, end of 18th Discourse.

than the actions and passions of men<sup>1</sup>, were not, as has been vulgarly supposed, wanting in sensibility to the charms of nature. It is true that the Christian, dwelling on the greatness and goodness of the Creator, who has made 'all nature beauty to the eye and music to the ear', delighted in those descriptions of that beauty which are to be found in the works of the early Greek Fathers.

The sensibility to natural beauty was of later growth among the Latins than the Greeks, and scarcely appeared before the poets and writers of the Augustan age. Virgil and Lucretius and Ovid have been cited. Ovid abounds in passages of picturesque description; and though such passages are rare in the prose writers of Rome as of Greece, many are to be found in the letters of Cicero. It is hardly necessary to mention Pliny<sup>2</sup>; but I do not think his description of the Clitumnus could be transferred to canvass, although it must be admitted that when he describes, with great minuteness of detail, the picturesque features of his villa at Tusci, he sums it up, as it were, in one sentence, saying it gives you the pleasure of a well painted landscape<sup>3</sup>.

How wonderfully Poetry, Music, and Painting, are all blended together, and all present to us, in this one description of a midsummer night in these lines:

<sup>1</sup> Socrates tells Phaedrus that the country and trees do not teach him anything, and that as a lover of knowledge he prefers men and cities, Συγγίνωσκε δέ μοι, ὦ ἀριστεῖ φιλομαθῆς γάρ εἰμι. τὰ μὲν οὖν χωρία, καὶ τὰ δένδρα οὐδὲν μ' ἐθέλει διδάσκειν, οἱ δ' ἐν τῷ ἄστει ἄνθρωποι. (Platonis *Opera*, ed. Stalbaum, vol. iv, p. 20, D. Phaedrus.) The banished Duke in *As You Like It* had another philosophy:

And this our life, exempt from public haunt,  
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.—Act ii, sc. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. viii, Epist. ix.

<sup>3</sup> 'Magnam capies voluptatem si hunc regionis situm ex monte prospexeris. Neque enim terras tibi, sed formam aliquam, ad eximiam pulchritudinem pictam videberis cernere; ea varietate ea descriptione quocumque inciderint oculi, reficiuntur'. Lib. v, Ep. vi, 18.

And bring your music forth into the air.  
How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank !  
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music  
Creep in our ears ; soft stillness and the night,  
Become the touches of sweet harmony.  
Sit, Jessica : Look, how the floor of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold <sup>1</sup>.

No painting could describe the Dover cliff like Edgar <sup>2</sup>, though in this marvellous passage the power of delineating natural beauty is less remarkable than the power of describing the height so as to make the brain of the reader dizzy. Not less power does Imogen, enquiring after her husband's departure, exhibit of painting in words the vanishing point of distance. In all these instances, especially the two last, the poet reaps the full advantage of his *successive* description over the *moment* of the painter.

One more example. The encampment of the hosts before the day of battle may be fraught with circumstances of which the painter may avail himself : but could he paint what follows ?

From camp to camp, through the foul womb of night,  
The hum of either army stilly sounds ;  
That the fixt sentinels almost receive  
The secret whispers of each other's watch :  
Fire answers fire ; and through their paly flames  
Each battle sees the other's umbered face ;  
Steed threatens steed, in high and boastful neighs  
Piercing the Night's dull ear ; and from the tents  
The armourers, accomplishing the knights,  
With busy hammers closing rivets up,  
Give dreadful note of preparation <sup>3</sup>.

The picturesque descriptions in the *Paradise Lost* are familiar to the reader of Milton ; in them, indeed, many principles of modern landscape, in which art imitates, cultivates, and improves nature, are to be found. The subject is a very large one, and the temptation to enter more at length upon it must be resisted <sup>4</sup>. The English writers in prose offer many

<sup>1</sup> *Merchant of Venice*, act v, sc. 1.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 324.

<sup>3</sup> *Henry the Fifth*, act iv : Chorus.

<sup>4</sup> I abstain from noticing the pictures in Italian Poetry and the *Lusiad* of Camoens, so much esteemed by Humboldt, *Kosmos*, 2, 1.



illustrations of the position for which I am contending, but I will confine myself to an extract from the prose of that great painter in prose and poetry, Sir Walter Scott. His novels abound in passages of the highest picturesque merit. Often what appears as a single picture in his description, cannot be represented on canvass otherwise than by a series of paintings, and then with a loss of effect.

Take for example the following extract from the first chapter of *Ivanhoe* :

The sun was setting upon one of the rich grassy glades of that forest which we have mentioned in the beginning of the chapter. Hundreds of broad short-stemmed oaks, which had witnessed perhaps the stately march of the Roman soldiery, flung their broad gnarled arms over a thick carpet of the most delicious green sward : in some places they were intermingled with beeches, hollies, and copsewood of various descriptions, so closely as totally to intercept the level beams of the sinking sun : in others they receded from each other, forming those long sweeping vistas, in the intricacy of which the eye delights to lose itself, while imagination considers them as the paths to yet wilder scenes of sylvan solitude. Here the red rays of the sun shot a broken and discoloured light, that partially hung upon the shattered boughs and mossy trunks of the trees, and then they illuminated in brilliant patches the portions of turf to which they made their way. A considerable open space, in the midst of this glade, seemed formerly to have been dedicated to the rites of Druidical superstition ; for on the summit of a hillock, so regular as to seem artificial, there still remained part of a circle of rough unhewn stones, of large dimensions. Seven stood upright ; the rest had been dislodged from their places, probably by the zeal of some convert to Christianity, and lay, some prostrate near their former site, and others on the side of the hill. One large stone only had found its way to the bottom, and in stopping the course of a small brook, which glided smoothly round the foot of the eminence, gave, by its opposition, a feeble voice of murmur to the placid and elsewhere silent streamlet. The human

figures which completed this landscape were in number two<sup>1</sup>.

One more example from the opening of a chapter in *The Heart of Midlothian* :

If I were to chuse a spot from which the rising or setting sun could be seen to the greatest possible advantage, it would be that wild walk winding around the foot of the high belt of semi-circular rocks called Salisbury Craigs, and marking the verge of the steep descent, which slopes down into the glen, on the South-eastern side of the city of Edinburgh. The prospect in its general outline commands a close-built high-piled city, stretching itself out beneath in a form which to a romantic imagination may be supposed to represent that of a dragon ; now a noble arm of the sea, with its rocks, isles, distant shores, and boundary of mountains : and now a fair and fertile champaign country, varied with hill, dale, and rock, and skirted by the varied and picturesque ridge of the Pentland Mountains. But as the path gently circles round the base of the cliffs, the prospect, composed as it is of these enchanting and sublime objects, changes at every step, and presents them blended with or divided from each other in every possible variety which can gratify the eye and the imagination. When a piece of scenery so beautiful yet so varied, so exciting by its intricacy and yet so sublime, is lighted up by the tints of morning and evening, and displays all that variety of shadowy depth exchanged with partial brilliancy, which gives character even to the tamest of landscapes, the effect approaches nearer to enchantment.

In these extracts the descriptive power of the painter is, I think, surpassed. But there are many other passages where the author is the rival of the painter, such as the approach to the Baron of Bradwardine's Tully Veolan<sup>2</sup>, the return of Morton<sup>3</sup> to Scotland by the winding descent which led to Bothwell Castle and the Clyde, the spot in which Rob Roy, the morning after his escape, spreads the morning banquet for Osbaldistone<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Chap. i, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Old Mortality*, 3. 108.

<sup>2</sup> *Waverley*, i, 74.

<sup>4</sup> *Rob Roy*, 3. 280.

My conclusion is, even from these scanty premisses—but they might be very greatly increased—that Lessing is mistaken in saying the poet, whether he write in poetry or prose, ought not to paint or describe natural scenery<sup>1</sup>; that, on the contrary, the poet may often rival and sometimes surpass the painter even in this department of art.

3. It remains only to draw the reader's attention to Lessing's estimate of his own powers: Lessing, Gervinus says<sup>2</sup>, was not deceived about himself. You may desiderate certain gifts in him: but the use which he made of those he had is an everlasting example to us. . . . He knew that he was a cold thinker, that he had none of that enthusiasm which he called the *ἀκμή*, the crown and blossom of the fine arts, the want of which in a poet it would be a sin to suspect. He makes this confession at the close of his *Dramaturgie*, and resolves to devote his intellect to science and criticism. Nevertheless, adds Gervinus, let no man of mere æsthetical pursuits, or historian of literature venture, out of the wisdom of his own conceit, to decide hastily against Lessing; let him be judged by his own never to be forgotten words:

'I am'—such is his explanation—'neither an actor nor a poet. People have often done me the honour of calling me the latter: but only because they do not know what I really am. It is by no means an inference to be drawn from a few dramatic essays which I have attempted. Not every one who takes a brush in his hand and lays on colours is a painter. The earliest of these essays were written in those years in which one mistook joyousness and levity for genius. For whatever is tolerable in the later essays I am well convinced I am entirely and alone indebted to criticism. I do not feel the living spring within me which works its way up by its own strength, which by its own strength shoots out into such rich, fresh, pure rays. I am obliged to squeeze everything out

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 141, 143, 292.

<sup>2</sup> *Gesch. der deutschen Dichtung*, 4. 348.

of myself by pressure and conduit pipes. I should have been so poor, so cold, so shortsighted, if I had not learnt in some measure to borrow modestly from the treasures of others, to warm myself at a stranger's fire, and to strengthen my vision by the glasses of art. I have therefore always been ashamed and vexed when I have heard or read anything which found fault with criticism. It ought to stimulate genius, and I flatter myself that I have gained something from it which comes very near to genius. I am a lame man who cannot possibly be edified by a satire upon crutches. But of course I am aware that crutches may help the lame to move, though they cannot make him run and so it is with criticism'.



# LAOCOON

## INTRODUCTION

THE first person who compared Painting and Poetry with each other was a man of fine feeling, who perceived that both these arts produced upon him a similar effect.

Both, he felt, placed before us things absent as present, appearance as reality. Both deceived, and the deceit of both was pleasing. A second person sought to penetrate into the inner nature of this pleasure, and discovered that in both it flowed from one and the same source. The beautiful, the notion of which we first derive from corporeal objects, has general rules applicable to various things; to actions, to thoughts, as well as to forms. A third person, who reflected upon the value and upon the distribution of these general rules, remarked that some of them had prevailed more in Painting and others more in Poetry, and that with respect to the latter rules, Poetry could be aided by the illustrations and examples supplied by Painting; with respect to the former rules, Painting could be aided by the illustrations and examples supplied by Poetry.

The first was an amateur; the second was a philosopher; the third was a critic.

It was not easy for the two first to make a wrong use either of their feeling or of their reasoning. On the other hand, the principal force of the remarks of the critic depends upon the correctness of their application to the particular case, and it would be astonishing, inasmuch as for one really acute, you

will find fifty merely witty critics, if this application had always been made with all the caution requisite to hold the scales equal between the two Arts. Apelles and Protogenes, in their lost writings upon Painting, confirmed and illustrated the rules relating to it by the rules of Poetry, which had been already established; so that we may be assured that in them the same moderation and accuracy prevailed, which at the present day we see in the works of Aristotle, Cicero, Horace, and Quintilian, when they apply the principles and experience of Painting to Eloquence and to Poetry.

It is the privilege of the Ancients in no one thing to do too much or too little.

But we moderns have often believed that in many of our works we have surpassed them, because we have changed their little byways of pleasure into highways, even at the risk of being led by these shorter and safer highways into paths which end in a wilderness.

The dazzling antithesis of the Greek Voltaire, that Painting is dumb Poetry, and Poetry eloquent Painting, is not to be found in any rudimental work. It was a smart saying, like many others of Simonides, the true side of which is so brilliant that we think it necessary to overlook the want of precision and the falseness which accompany it.

But the Ancients did not overlook this; for while they confirmed the *dictum* of Simonides as to the effect produced by both Arts, they did not forget to inculcate that, notwithstanding the perfect similarity of this effect, these Arts differed, as well in the object as in the manner of their imitations ("ἄλλῃ καὶ τρόποις μιμήσεως")<sup>1</sup>.

Nevertheless, many of our most modern critics, as if they were ignorant of any such distinction, have said the crudest things in the world upon the harmony of Painting and Poetry.

At one time they compress Poetry within the limits of Painting: at another time they

make Painting fill the whole wide sphere of Poetry. Whatever is the right of the one must be conceded to the other. Whatever is in the one pleasing, or unpleasing, must necessarily please or displease in the other; and full of this idea, they pronounce in the most confident tone the most superficial judgments, when, criticising the works of the Poet and the Painter upon the same subject, they consider the difference of treatment to be a fault, which fault they ascribe to the one or the other accordingly as they happen to have more taste for Poetry or for Painting.

This spurious criticism has partially corrupted even the Virtuosos themselves. It has generated a mania for pictorial description in Poetry, and for allegorical style in Painting; while it was sought to render the *former* a speaking Picture, without really knowing what could and ought to be painted; and the *latter* a mute poem; not having considered how far general ideas are susceptible of expression without departing from their proper end, and without falling into a purely arbitrary style of phraseology.

To oppose this false taste, and to counteract these unfounded opinions, is the principal object of the following observations.

They have arisen casually, and have grown to their present size rather in consequence of the course of my reading than through any methodical development of general principles. They are rather irregular *collectanea* for a book, than a book. Yet, I flatter myself that, even as such, they will not be wholly despised. We Germans have no lack of systematic treatises. We know, as well as any nation in the world, how, out of some granted definition, to arrange all that we want to arrange in the very best order.

Baumgarten acknowledged that he was indebted to Gesner's Dictionary for the greater portion of his examples in his treatise on Aesthetics. If my



*raisonnement* is not as conclusive as Baumgarten's, at least my examples will savour more of the fountain head.

As I set out from Laocoon, and often return to him, I have thought it right to give him a share in the title of the work. As to other little digressions upon several points, of the ancient history of the Arts, they contribute little to my main object, and they are only allowed to remain here because I cannot hope to find a better place for them elsewhere.

I should also mention that under the name of Painting I include generally the plastic Arts ; and I do not deny that under the name of Poetry I may also have had some regard to the other Arts which have the characteristic of progressive imitation.

## CHAPTER I

WINKELMANN considers that the characteristics of general excellence, which are to be found in the masterpieces of Greek painting and sculpture, consist of a noble simplicity and quiet grandeur as well in their attitude as in their expression.

As the depths of the sea, he says<sup>1</sup>, always remain at rest, let the surface rage as it will, even so does the expression in the Greek figures show through all suffering a great and calm soul. This soul is portrayed in the countenance of Laocoon, and not in the countenance alone, notwithstanding the intense severity of his suffering. The pain which discovers itself in all the muscles and sinews of the body, and which from these only, without considering the face and other parts, we seem to perceive in the agonised expression of the belly alone; this pain, I say, expresses itself nevertheless without any torture in the face or in the general position. He utters no horrible scream as Virgil's verse makes his Laocoon utter: the opening of his mouth does not show this: it is rather a subdued groan of anguish, as Sadolet<sup>2</sup> describes it. Pain of body and greatness of soul are distributed with equal strength throughout the whole figure and in equal proportions. Laocoon suffers, but he suffers like the Philoctetes of Sophocles: his misery touches our very souls; but we desire to be able to bear suffering as this great man bears it.

The expression of so great a soul goes far beyond a representation of natural beauty. The Artist must have felt in himself the strength of the soul which he has impressed upon his marble. Greece had artists and philosophers blended in one person, and more than one Metrodorus<sup>3</sup>. Philosophy gave her hand to Art, and breathed into the forms of it no common soul, etc.

The observation which lies at the foundation of this theory, namely, that pain does not show itself

in the countenance of Laocoon with that furious vehemence, which from the intensity of it we should expect, is perfectly true. It is also indisputable that in this respect where a man of half knowledge would pronounce that the Artist had not attained to nature and had not reached the true pathos of suffering : in this very respect, I say, the wisdom of the observation is most clearly manifest.

It is only as to the fundamental reason on which Winkelmann founds this wise observation, and as to the generality of the rule which he extracts from this fundamental reason that I venture to differ from him.

I confess that the unfavourable side glance which he casts upon Virgil startled me at first, and in the next place the comparison with Philoctetes. From this I will take my point of departure, and write down my thoughts in the order in which they have been developed.

'Laocoon suffers like the Philoctetes of Sophocles'. How does he suffer? It is strange that his sufferings have left so different an impression upon us. The lamentations, the screams, the wild curses with which his pain filled the camp, and disturbed all the sacrifices, all the holy acts, resounded no less dreadfully in the desert island, and were the cause of his being banished to it. What tones of dejection, misery, and despair, with the imitation of which the Poet caused the theatre to resound. The third Act of this piece has been discovered to be much shorter than the others ; a plain proof, say the critics<sup>4</sup>, that the Ancients troubled themselves very little about the equal length of the Acts<sup>5</sup>. That I too believe ; but I should prefer to found my belief upon another example. The piteous exclamations, the moaning, the broken off ἀ ἀ φεύ ἀτταταὶ ὦ μοί μοί ; whole lines full of πάντα παπὰ, of which this Act consists, and which must have been declaimed with other prolongations and pauses than would be needed for a continuous reading, have, in the representation of

this Act, doubtless caused it to continue as long as the others. It appears much shorter on paper to the reader than it would have appeared to the spectators.

To scream is the natural expression of bodily pain. Homer's wounded warriors not unfrequently fall with a scream to the earth. The wounded Venus screams loudly,—not in order that by this scream she may appear as the soft goddess of pleasure, but rather to give her a right to a suffering nature<sup>6</sup>. For even the brazen Mars, when he felt the lance of Diomedes, shrieks as dreadfully as ten thousand raging warriors would shriek at once—so dreadfully that both armies were terrified<sup>7</sup>.

High as Homer exalts his heroes above human nature, yet they remain true to it whenever there is a question of the feeling of anguish or suffering, or of the expression of that feeling by screams or tears or invectives. In their deeds they are creatures of a higher kind ; in their feelings they are true men.

I am aware that we, the refined Europeans of a wiser posterity, know how to command better our mouths and our eyes. High breeding and decency forbid screams and tears. The active courage of the first rough ages of the world has been changed, in our day, into the courage of suffering. Yet even our forefathers were greater in the latter than in the former. But our forefathers were barbarians. To suppress all expression of pain, to meet the stroke of death with unchanged eye, to die smiling under the asp's bite, to abstain from bewailing our sins or the loss of our dearest friend, are traits of the old hero courage of the Northmen<sup>8</sup>. Talnatako laid down a law to his Gomsburgers that they should fear nothing, and that the word fear should not once be named amongst them.

Not so the Greek ! He had feelings and fear ; he uttered his anguish and his sorrow ; he was ashamed of no mortal weakness ; none ought to withhold him

from the path of honour or the fulfilment of his duty. What the barbarian derived from savageness and from being inured to hardship, principle produced in the Greek. In him heroism was like the concealed sparks in the flint, which sleep in peace so long as no external force awakens them<sup>9</sup>, and which do not take from the stone either its clearness or its coldness. In the barbarian, heroism was a bright devouring flame which was always raging, and devoured, or at least obscured, every other good quality he possessed. When Homer leads the Trojans with a wild shout, and the Greeks, on the other hand, in deliberate stillness to the battle, the commentators justly remark that by the former the poet intended to represent the barbarians, by the latter the people of civilisation. I am surprised that they have failed to notice a like opposition of character in another passage<sup>10</sup>. The rival hosts have agreed to a suspension of arms; they are busied with the burning of their dead, which does not take place without many hot tears, δάκρυα θερμὰ χέοντες. But Priam forbids his Trojans to weep, οὐδ' εἰα κλαίειν Πρίαμος μέγας. He forbids them to weep, says Madame Dacier, because he is afraid that they would enfeeble themselves, and on the morrow combat with diminished fury. Well, but I ask myself, why must Priam alone feel this anxiety? Why does not Agamemnon give the same prohibition to his Greeks? The meaning of the poet lies deeper. He wishes to teach us that only the civilised Greeks can at the same time weep and be bold: while the uncivilised Trojan cannot weep without having first stifled his manhood. Νεμέσσωμαι γὰρ μὲν οὐδὲν κλαίειν he makes, in another place, the discreet son of the wise Nestor say<sup>11</sup>.

It is remarkable that out of the few Tragedies which have come to us from antiquity, there are only two in which bodily pain is not the least part of the misfortune which affects the suffering hero. Besides Philoctetes there is the dying Hercules.

He also is made by Sophocles to complain, whine, weep, and scream. Thanks to our clever neighbours, those masters of the 'convenable', no longer can a whining Philoctetes, a screaming Hercules, those most ridiculous and intolerable personages appear on the stage. It is true that one of their latest Poets has ventured on a Philoctetes. But would he venture to show us a real Philoctetes? <sup>12</sup>.

Laocoon himself is mentioned among the plays of Sophocles. If fate had only spared us this Laocoon! From the slight notices of some old Grammarians we cannot draw any inference as to how the Poet treated this subject; of this I am assured, that he would not have described Laocoon as more stoical than Philoctetes and Hercules. Everything stoical is unsuited to the stage, and our sympathy is always proportioned to the suffering which the object of interest expresses. If we observe that he bears suffering with a great soul, this great soul will, it is true, awaken our wonderment; but wonderment is a cold affection: the inert amazement produced by it is excluded by every warmer passion, as well as by every more distinct representation of the idea.

And now I come to my conclusion. If it be true that the cry which arises from the sensation of bodily suffering, especially according to the old Greek fashion of thinking, may well consist with a great soul, then the outward expression of such a soul cannot be the cause why—notwithstanding it—the artist should not imitate in his marble this cry; but there must be another cause why, in this respect, he differs from his rival the Poet, who has very good reasons for expressing this cry.

## CHAPTER II

BE it fable or history that Love caused the first attempt of the creative Art, thus much is certain, that it was never weary of assisting the great old Masters ; for although now the scope of Painting is enlarged so as to be more especially the art which imitates bodies upon flat surfaces, yet the wise Greek placed it within much narrower limits and confined it to the imitation of beautiful bodies. His Painter painted nothing but the beautiful ; even the common type of the beautiful, the beautiful of an inferior kind, was to him only an accidental object for the exercise of his practice and for his recreation. The perfection of the object itself must be the thing which enraptures him : he was too great to require of those who contemplated him that they should be content with the cold satisfaction arising from the sight of a successful resemblance, or from reflection upon the skill of the artist producing it ; to his Art nothing was dearer, nothing seemed to him nobler than the object and end of Art itself.

‘Who would paint you when nobody will look at you?’ says the old epigrammatist of a very ugly man<sup>1</sup>. Many modern artists would say, ‘Be as ugly as it is possible to be, I will nevertheless paint you, though no one will willingly look at you, yet they will willingly look at my picture ; not because it reproduces you, but because it is a proof of my skill which can so exactly imitate so hideous an object’.

In truth the connection between this extravagant boasting and a fatal dexterity, which is not ennobled by the worth of the object, is only too natural ; even the Greeks have had their Pauson and their

Pyreicus.<sup>2</sup> They had them, but they passed severe judgment upon them. Pauson, who confined himself to the beautiful of ordinary nature, whose low taste most congenially expressed<sup>3</sup> the deficient and the hateful, lived in the most sordid poverty<sup>4</sup>; and Pyreicus, who painted barbers' rooms, dirty workshops, donkeys, and kitchen vegetables with all the diligence of a Dutch painter, as if such things in nature had so much fascination and were so rarely seen, obtained the nickname of 'Πυραρόγραφος', the filth painter<sup>5</sup>; although the rich voluptuary bought his works at extravagant prices, thus coming to the help of their utter worthlessness by impressing upon them a fictitious value. Governments themselves have not thought it unworthy of their vigilance to restrain by force the artist within his proper sphere. The law of the Thebans, which ordered the imitation of the beautiful and forbade the imitation of the ugly, is well known. It was no law against the bungler, which it was generally supposed to be, even by Junius<sup>6</sup>. It condemned the Greek Ghezzi<sup>7</sup>, the unworthy trick of Art to attain a likeness through an exaggeration of the uglier parts of the original—in a word, the caricature.

From the spirit of the beautiful also flowed the law of the Olympic judges. Every Olympian conqueror obtained a statue, but an Iconic was only granted to him who had been three times a conqueror<sup>8</sup>. Portraits of the moderately successful were not allowed to abound among works of Art, for although even the portrait approached to the ideal, nevertheless the likeness was the dominant circumstance; it is the ideal of a certain man, not the ideal of a man generally.

We smile when we hear that with the Ancients even the Arts were subjected to civil laws; but we are not always right when we smile. Unquestionably laws should exercise no power over sciences, for the end of science is truth. Truth is necessary for the soul, and it would be tyranny to exercise the



slightest compulsion with respect to the satisfaction of this essential need.

The end of Art, on the other hand, is pleasure, and pleasure can be dispensed with; therefore, it may always depend upon the law-giver what kind of pleasure he will allow, and what amount of each kind.

The plastic Arts especially, over and above the certain influence which they exercise upon the character of a nation, are capable of an effect which requires the vigilant supervision of the law. If beautiful men are the cause of beautiful statues, the latter, on the other hand, have reacted upon the former, and the state has to thank beautiful statues for beautiful men.

With us the tender imagination of the mother appears to express itself only in monsters. From this point of view I believe that in certain ancient legends, which are generally thrown aside as untrue, there is some truth to be found. The mother of Aristomenes, Aristodaemos, Alexander the Great, Scipio, Augustus, Galerius, all dreamt during their pregnancy that their husband was a snake. The snake was the sign of godhead<sup>9</sup>, and the beautiful statues of a Bacchus, an Apollo, a Mercury, a Hercules, were seldom without snakes. These honourable wives had in the day-time fed their eyes on the god, and the bewildering dream awakened the form of the wild beast. This is how I read the dream, and despise the explanation which was given by the pride of sires and the shamelessness of flatterers: for certainly there must have been one cause why the adulterous fancy always took the form of a snake.

But I return to my path. My only wish has been to lay down firmly the principle that with the ancients beauty was the highest law of the imitative Art.

This principle being firmly established, it necessarily follows that everything else by which the

imitative Art can at the same time extend its influence must, if it does not harmonise with beauty, entirely give place to it, and if it does harmonise, at least be subordinate to it. Let me dwell on the consideration of Expression.

There are passions and degrees of passion which express themselves in the countenance by the most hideous distortions, and which place the whole body in such attitudes of violence that all the fine lines which mark it in a position of repose are lost. The ancient artists either abstained from these altogether and entirely, or used them in a subordinate degree, in which they were susceptible of some measure of beauty. Rage and despair do not disgrace any of their works. I dare aver that they have never created a Fury<sup>10</sup>.

Wrath is diminished into severity. The Jupiter of the poet who hurls the thunderbolt is wrathful ; the Jupiter of the artist is severe.

Lamentation is softened into sorrow ; and when this mitigation cannot take place—if the lamentation should be equally degrading and disfiguring, what did Timanthes do ? His picture of the Sacrifice of Iphigenia, in which he distributed to all the bystanders their proper share of grief, but veiled the countenance of the father, which ought to manifest a grief surpassing that of all the others, is well known, and many clever things have been said about it. He had<sup>11</sup>, said one critic, so exhausted himself in the physiognomy of sorrow that he despaired of being able to give an expression of greater sorrow to the father. He thereby confessed<sup>12</sup>, said another critic, that the grief of a father in such a catastrophe was beyond all expression. I, for my part, see neither the incapacity of the artist nor the incapacity of the Art. As the degree of the affection becomes stronger, so do the corresponding features of the countenance ; the highest degree has the most decided features, and nothing is easier for Art than to express them. But Timanthes knew the limits

which the Graces had fixed to his Art. He knew that the grief which overcame Agamemnon as a father found expression in distortions, which are always hideous. So far as beauty and dignity could be combined with this expression he went. He might easily have passed over or have softened what was hideous : but inasmuch as his composition did not permit him to do either, what resource remained but to veil it? What he might not paint he left to conjecture. In a word, this veiling is a sacrifice which the artist made to beauty. It is an example not how an artist can force expression beyond the limits of Art, but how an artist should subject it to the first law of Art—the law of beauty<sup>13</sup>.

Apply this observation to the Laocoon and the reason which I seek is clear. The master strove to attain the highest beauty in given circumstances of bodily anguish. It was impossible to combine the latter in all its disfiguring vehemence with the former. It was therefore necessary to diminish it ; he must soften screams into sighs, not because the screaming betrayed an ignoble soul, but because it disfigured the countenance in a hideous manner. Let any one only in thought force wide open the mouth of Laocoon and judge. Let any one make him scream and then look. It was a creation which inspired sympathy, because it exhibited beauty and suffering at the same time ; now it has become a hideous horrible creation from which we gladly turn away our face, because the aspect of it excites what is unpleasant in pain without the beauty in the suffering object which can change this unpleasantness into the secret feeling of sympathy.

The mere wide-opening of the mouth—putting out of consideration how violent and disgusting the other portions of the face distorted and displaced by it would become—is in painting a blot, and in statuary a cavity, which produces the worst effect possible. Montfaucon showed little taste when he declared an old bearded head with an open mouth

to be Jupiter<sup>14</sup> instructing an Oracle. Must a god scream when he reveals the future? Would a pleasing curve of the mouth make his speech suspicious? Neither do I believe Valerius that Ajax, in the picture by Timanthes already mentioned, must have been represented as screaming<sup>15</sup>. Far worse masters in the time of decayed Art do not allow the wildest barbarians, when suffering terror and agony of death under the sword of the conqueror, to open their mouths so as to scream<sup>16</sup>.

It is certain that this reduction of the most extreme bodily anguish to a lower scale of feeling was visible in many of the ancient works of Art. The suffering Hercules in the poisoned garment, by the hand of an unknown ancient master, was not the Hercules of Sophocles, who yelled so dreadfully that the Locrian cliffs and the Eubean promontories re-echoed with it. He was rather melancholy than mad<sup>17</sup>. The Philoctetes of Pythagoras Leontinus appeared to impart his pain to the observer, an effect which the slightest feature of ugliness would have prevented. It may be asked how I know that this master had made a statue of Philoctetes?—from a passage in Pliny, which ought not to have waited for my correction, so palpably is it corrupted or mutilated<sup>18</sup>.

## CHAPTER III

BUT, as has been already remarked, Art has in these modern times greatly widened its boundaries. Its imitative power, it is said, extends over all visible nature, of which the beautiful forms but a small part. Truth and expression are its first law ; and as nature herself always sacrifices beauty to higher views, so must the artist also subordinate it to his general design and pursue it further than truth and expression allow. It suffices that through truth and expression the most hideous thing in nature is changed into the beautiful of Art.

Suppose we allow this idea to pass unchallenged, as to its merit or demerit ; are there not other considerations independent of it which, nevertheless, oblige the Artist to observe moderation in his expression, and not to choose for representation the most extreme point of action ? I believe that the single moment to which the material limits of Art confine all her imitations will lead us to such considerations.

If the Artist out of ever changing nature cannot use more than a single moment, and the Painter especially can only use this single moment with reference to a single point of view ; if their works, however, are made not only to be seen but to be considered, and considered for a long time and repeatedly ; then is it certain that this single moment, and the single point of view of this single moment, must be chosen which are most fruitful of effect. That alone is fruitful of effect which leaves free play to the power of imagination. The more we see, the more must we aid our sight by thought ; the more we aid our sight by thought, the more

must we believe that we see. But in all the gradations of a passion, there is no moment which has less this advantage than the moment of the highest degree of the passion. Beyond this there is nothing, and to show the eye the extremest point is to bind the wings of Fancy, and to compel her, inasmuch as her power cannot go beyond the impression on the senses, to busy herself with feeble and subordinate images, beyond which is that visible fulness of expression which she shuns as her boundary. When Laocoon sighs the imagination may hear him scream; but when he screams, then it can neither advance a step higher in this representation, nor descend a step lower without beholding him in a more tolerable and therefore in a less interesting condition: you either hear him groan for the first time, or you see him already dead.

Moreover, if this single moment obtains through Art an unchangeable duration, then it ought to express nothing which in our conception is transitory<sup>1</sup>. All phenomena, the character of which we consider to be that they suddenly appear and suddenly disappear—that they can only be what they are for a moment—all such phenomena, be they agreeable or shocking, obtain, when prolonged by Art, so unnatural an appearance, that their impression becomes weaker with each repeated inspection, and ends in our feeling disgust or fear at the whole object. La Mettrie who allowed himself to be painted and engraved as a second Democritus, smiles only the first time you see him. Look at him oftener, and instead of a philosopher, there is a fool; the smile has become a grin. So it is with the screaming. The grievous pain which forces out the scream, either soon ceases or destroys the sufferer. The most enduring man screams, but does not scream incessantly; and it is only this apparent unceasingness in the material imitation of Art which reduces his scream to a womanish incapacity, and a childish intolerance of pain. This, at least,

the Artist of Laocoon had to avoid, even if the screaming would not have injured beauty, and even if it were permitted to his Art to express suffering without beauty.

Among the old Painters Timomachus appears to have adopted by choice subjects in which emotion is carried to an extreme ; his raging Ajax, his child-murdering Medea, were famous pictures ; but from the accounts which we have of them it is clear that he perfectly understood and knew how to combine that point at which the observer not so much sees as surmises the crisis, with that phenomenon with which, we do not so necessarily connect the idea of the transitory, as to render the prolongation of it displeasing in a work of Art. He has not painted the Medea at the moment in which she actually murders her children ; but some minutes before, while maternal love was still struggling with jealousy. We foresee the end of the struggle. We shudder by anticipation at the mere sight of the savage Medea, and our imagination goes far beyond what the Painter has been able to draw in this terrible moment. But for this very reason the prolonged indecision of Medea represented by Art, so little distresses us, that we rather wish that in nature it had so remained, that the strife of passion had not ended, or, at least, had lasted long enough to allow time and reflection to disarm rage, and to secure the triumph of maternal feeling. This wisdom on the part of Timomachus has procured for him great and frequent praise, and raised him far above other obscure painters who were so unintelligent as to paint Medea at the moment of her greatest fury, and to give a perpetuity to that transitory and fleeting degree of the extremest raving which revolts everybody's nature. The poet<sup>2</sup> who blames them for this says, very sensibly, while he addresses the picture itself,—‘Dost thou continually thirst for the blood of thy children? Is there for ever a new Jason, for ever a new Creusa,

those who unceasingly exasperate you? to the Devil with you even in your picture!', he adds, full of disgust.

As to the raging Ajax of Timomachus, we can form an opinion from the account of Philostratus<sup>3</sup>. Ajax did not appear as he vented his fury on the herds, and bound and slew oxen and goats. But the master painted him as he was sitting exhausted with these mad acts of heroism, and taking the resolution to slay himself: and this is really the mad Ajax, not because he is at the moment mad, but because we see that he has been mad; because the intensity of his madness is most vividly apparent from the shame and despair under which he is now suffering. We see the storm in the wreck, and the corpses which are thrown upon the beach.



## CHAPTER IV

I EXAMINE the prominent reasons why the master artist of the Laocoon was obliged to observe moderation in the expression of bodily pain; I find that they are altogether derived from the peculiar nature of Art, and from the necessary limits and requirements of Art. It would be difficult to apply any of these reasons to Poetry.

Without stopping here to enquire how far the poet can be successful in describing corporeal beauty, thus much is indisputable, that the whole unbounded realm of perfection lies open to his imitation, this visible veil, under which perfection becomes beauty, can be only one of the subordinate means by which he knows how to interest us on behalf of his persons. These means he often entirely neglects, assured that, if his hero has won our favour, we shall either be so much occupied with his nobler qualities as not to think about his bodily form; or, if we do think about it, to be so prepossessed in his favour as to bestow on him, if not one absolutely beautiful, yet one which is not displeasing: least of all will he refer to the sense of sight any poetical trait not intended expressly for the eye.

When Virgil's Laocoon screams, who does not know that a wide mouth is necessary for screaming, and that this wide mouth is hideous? Enough that *clamores horrendos ad sidera tollit* produces a sublime effect on the sense of hearing, whatever it may produce on the sense of seeing.

If there be any one who desiderates an image of beauty, he has entirely failed to appreciate the general effect which the poet intended to convey.

Nothing, in the next place, constrains the poet to

concentrate his picture upon a single moment. He takes up each of his actions as he likes from their very beginning and carries them through all possible changes up to the very end; each of these changes which would have cost the painter a whole work specially devoted to it, costs the poet only a single trait, and even if this trait, considered by itself, might jar on the imagination of the hearer, either such preparation has been made for it by what has gone before, or it has been so softened and compensated for by what has followed as to lose its particular impression, and in this combination produces the best possible effect; and, if it were really unbecoming a man to scream in the bitterness of his anguish, how could this slight and transitory impropriety derogate from the esteem which his virtues in other respects have already won from us?

Virgil's Laocoon screams, but this screaming Laocoon is the very same whom we have already known and loved as the wisest of patriots and the kindest of fathers. We attribute his scream not to his character but to his intolerable suffering. This alone we hear in his scream; and it is only by this scream that the poet can make us sensible of his suffering. Moreover, who blames him? Who does not rather acknowledge that if the sculptor did well in not allowing Laocoon to scream, the poet did as well in allowing him to do so?

But Virgil is here only a narrating poet. In this justification is the dramatic poet to be also included? The narrative of a scream makes one kind of impression; the scream itself makes another. The Drama, which is destined to be a living painting through the representation of the actor, ought perhaps on that very account to adhere the closer to the laws of material painting. In the actor we not only believe that we see and hear a screaming Philoctetes: we actually do see and hear him scream. The nearer the actor approaches to nature, the

more will our ears and eyes be afflicted ; for so they would certainly be in nature, if we witnessed such loud and vehement utterances of pain. Besides, bodily pain is not generally susceptible of the sympathy which evils of another kind awaken. Bodily pain does not present a sufficiently distinct idea to our imagination to produce by the mere aspect of it at all a corresponding feeling in us. Sophocles, therefore, would have carelessly overstepped not merely an arbitrary sense of decorum, but one deeply founded in the very nature of our feelings if he had made Philoctetes and Hercules whine, and weep, and scream, and roar in this manner. The bystanders in the scene could not possibly take so great a share in his sufferings as these immoderate outbreaks of sorrow would seem to require. To us spectators they would appear comparatively cold, and yet we can only consider their sympathy as the measure of our own. Add to this observation that the actor can scarcely, or indeed not at all, push to the verge of actual illusion the representation of bodily pain ; and who knows whether the modern dramatic writers are not rather to be praised than blamed for shunning altogether and entirely these rocks, or at least for coasting round them in a light skiff?

How much in theory would have appeared incontestable if the achievements of genius had not succeeded in proving the contrary. All these observations have some foundation, and, nevertheless, Philoctetes remains one of the masterpieces of the stage. For one part of these observations does not specially affect Sophocles, and it is only because he has thrown aside the other part of them that he has attained to beauties of which the timid critic, without this example, would never have dreamt. The following remarks will show this more exactly :

1. How wonderfully the poet has known how to strengthen and deepen the idea of bodily pain ! He chose a wound (for the circumstances of the story

may be considered by us as dependent upon his choice, inasmuch as, on account of these advantageous circumstances, he chose the whole story), he chose, I say, a wound and not an internal malady, because he was able to make a more vivid representation of the latter than of the former, however painful it may be. The inward sympathetic fire which consumed Meleager when his mother sacrificed him by the burning of the fatal log to the wrath of his sister, would have been less adapted to the theatre than a wound. This wound, moreover, was a divine punishment ; a poison worse than any to be found in nature incessantly raged within him, and it was only the vehement access of pain which had its appointed limit and then the wretched man fell into a stupefying sleep, in which he was obliged to refresh his exhausted nature in order that he might again enter upon the same path of suffering. Chateaubrun represents him as wounded only by the poisoned dart of a Trojan. From such a common occurrence what extraordinary result is to be expected ? In the wars of ancient times everybody was exposed to it ; how came it to pass that in the case of Philoctetes alone the consequences were so dreadful ? A natural poison working for nine years without causing death is infinitely more improbable than all the fabulous wonders with which the Greek has ornamented his story.

2. However great and horrible he made the bodily sufferings of his hero, he felt nevertheless that they alone would not be sufficient to excite a marked degree of sympathy. He combined them with other evils, which, considered in themselves, were not calculated to excite especial emotion, but which, through this combination, wore so melancholy an aspect as to cause a sympathy in their turn with the bodily pains. These evils were an entire privation of the society of man, hunger, and all the distresses of life to which, in such privation and under an inclement sky, a man would be exposed.<sup>1</sup>

Let any one only reflect upon the condition of a man in such circumstances. But give him health, strength, and industry, and he becomes a Robinson Crusoe who makes little claim upon our sympathy, although we are far from being indifferent about his fate. For we are rarely so delighted with human society that the repose, which out of it we enjoy, does not appear fascinating to us, especially if we add the conviction, with which every one flatters himself, that he will learn by degrees to dispense with assistance from others altogether. On the other hand, let a man have the most painful and incurable disease, but surround him with pleasant friends, who will not let him be in need of anything—who lighten, so far as in them lies, his suffering, in whose presence he may utter freely groans and lamentations—there will certainly be a sympathy with him, but it will not last long, and at last we shrug our shoulders and advise him to be patient. It is only when both predicaments concur, when the solitary man has no control over his body, when the sick man receives as little from others as he does from himself, and when his cries perish in the desert air—it is then that we witness all the misery which can befall human nature smite with collected force the wretch, and every fleeting thought by which we place ourselves in his position excites shuddering and horror. We see nothing before us but despair in its most ghastly form, and no sympathy is stronger, none melts the soul more completely, than that which mingles itself with the representation of despair. Of this kind is the sympathy which we feel for Philoctetes, and most strongly in that moment when we see him deprived of his bow, the only thing which had enabled him to support his miserable life. Oh! that Frenchman who had no understanding to perceive this, no heart to feel this; or, if he had, could have been petty enough to have sacrificed it all to the wretched taste of his own countrymen. Chateaubrun places

Philoctetes in the society of other persons. He makes a princess's daughter come to him in the desert island, and this is not all, but she brings a mistress of the ceremonies with her, of whom it is difficult to say whether the princess or the poet stood most in need. He leaves out altogether the excellent dramatic incident of the bow; but he makes beautiful eyes take the place of it. In truth, the bows and arrows would have appeared ridiculous to the young French hero. On the other hand, nothing is more serious to him than the wrath of the beautiful eyes. The Greek tortures us with the harrowing reflection that poor Philoctetes will remain without his bow in the desert island and perish miserably. The Frenchman knows another way to our hearts. He makes us fear that the son of Achilles will depart without his princess. This is what the Parisian critics call to triumph over the ancients, and one of them proposed to call the Chateaubrunian piece *la difficulté vaincue*<sup>2</sup>.

3. Next to the general effect let any one consider the only scene in which Philoctetes is no longer the deserted sick man—where he hopes soon to leave his wretched desert and to return to his kingdom; where, moreover, all his misfortune is confined to his bitter wound. He whines, he screams, and undergoes the most ghastly convulsions. Here, properly speaking, arises the objection of violated decorum. It is an Englishman who makes this objection, a man, moreover, whom one would not lightly charge with false delicacy. As has been already remarked, he has good ground for his objection. All feelings and passions, he says, with which others can very little sympathise, become repulsive when they are too vehemently expressed<sup>3</sup>.

It is for the same reason that to cry out with bodily pain, how intolerable soever, appears always unmanly and unbecoming. There is, however, a good deal of sympathy even with bodily pain. If, as has been already observed,

I see a stroke aimed and just ready to fall upon the leg or arm of another person, I naturally shrink and draw back my own leg or my own arm, and when it does fall I feel it, in some measure, and am hurt by it as well as the sufferer. My hurt, however, is no doubt excessively slight, and, upon that account, if he makes any violent outcry, as I cannot go along with him, I never fail to despise him<sup>4</sup>.

Nothing is more deceitful than general laws for our feelings. Their tissue is so fine and complicated that the most cautious speculation can scarcely seize upon any single thread and follow it through all its entanglements ; and if we could do this what should we gain ? There is in nature scarcely any one unmixed feeling ; with every individual one a thousand others spring up at the same time, the least of which alters entirely the ground of the feeling, so that exceptions grow upon exceptions, which end in confining the presumed general principle to the experience of a few particular instances. We despise those, says the Englishman, whom we hear violently screaming from corporeal suffering. But not always : not for the first time : not when we see that the sufferer does all in his power to stifle his anguish ; not when we know him to be in other respects a man of firmness ; still less when we see amid his sufferings proofs of his steadfastness, when we see that his anguish can force him to scream but to nothing further ; that he would rather subject himself to a larger continuance of his suffering than make the slightest change in his manner of thinking, in his resolutions, although in such a change he might expect the end of his suffering. All this is to be found in Philoctetes. Moral greatness consisted, in the opinion of the ancient Greeks, as much in an unchangeable love to friends as in an unalterable hatred to enemies. This greatness Philoctetes throughout all his sufferings possessed. His sufferings had not so dried his eyes that he could not shed tears over the fate of his old friend. His pain

had not made him so abject that in order to obtain his liberty he would forgive his enemies and lend himself to the execution of all their selfish projects ; and would the Athenians have despised this rock of a man because the waves, which could not shake his purpose, made him cry aloud ? I acknowledge that I have little taste for the philosophy of Cicero ; least of all for that which he ostentatiously displays in the second book of his *Tusculan Disputations* upon the endurance of bodily suffering,—one would suppose that he was training a gladiator, so vehement is he against the outward expression of bodily suffering. In that expression he appears to find only impatience, without considering that it is frequently quite involuntary, but that true courage can only show itself in the actions of a free will. In the tragedy of Sophocles, he hears nothing but the complaining and screaming of Philoctetes, never considering the constant manliness of his conduct in other respects. How otherwise would he have found occasion for his rhetorical onslaught on the Poets ?<sup>5</sup> ‘They would make us effeminate while they introduce to our notice the bravest man crying aloud’. They must let him cry : for a theatre is no arena. It is the part of the venal or condemned gladiator to do and suffer everything with decorum. From him no loud cry must be heard, in him no convulsion of pain must be seen. For his wounds, his death, must divert the spectator ; therefore Art must learn to hide all feeling. The slightest expression of it would have awakened sympathy, and frequently sympathy excited would have made a speedy end to the cold ghastly performance. But the emotion which should not be excited here is that which is the very purpose of the tragic scene, and which requires an exactly opposite behaviour. The heroes of the theatre must manifest feeling, must utter their anguish, and allow nature herself to work in them. If they betray that they are acting under control and restraint,



they leave our hearts cold, and prizefighters in buskins can, at the utmost, but excite our wonder. This appellation all the persons of the so-called tragedies of Seneca deserve ; and I am firmly of opinion that the Gladiatorial shows were the principal cause why the Romans in their tragedies remained so far below mediocrity. The spectators learnt in the bloody amphitheatre to mistake all that was natural. A Ctesias<sup>6</sup> could indeed have studied his Art there, but a Sophocles never. The most tragical genius accustomed to these artificial death scenes must have been corrupted into bombast and rhodomontade. But these rhodomontades were as incapable of inspiring a true heroic spirit, as the lamentations of Philoctetes were of causing effeminacy. The lamentations are those of a man, but the acts are those of a hero. Both compose the manly hero who is neither effeminate nor hardened, but at one time appears as the former, at another as the latter, even as nature, principle, and duty alternately require. It is the sublimest subject which wisdom can produce, and Art can imitate.

4. It is not enough that Sophocles has secured his sensitive Philoctetes against contempt ; he has also wisely forestalled all the objections which otherwise might have been brought against him by the Englishman. For, although we do not always despise the man who screams from corporeal suffering, it is nevertheless incontestable that we do not feel for him so much sympathy as this scream seems to demand. How then should those comport themselves who have to do with the screaming Philoctetes ? Should they be moved in a high degree ? That is contrary to nature. Should they show themselves as cold and embarrassed as men are actually wont to be in such circumstances ? That would place them entirely out of harmony with the spectators. But, as has been observed, this also has been forestalled by Sophocles ; namely, by causing the attendant persons to have their

own interests; so that the impression which the scream of Philoctetes makes upon them is not the only thing which concerns them, and the spectator does not so much heed the disproportion of their sympathy with the scream, as observe the change which arises, or ought to arise, in their own feelings and projects through this sympathy, whether it be weak or strong. Neoptolemus and the Chorus have deceived the wretched Philoctetes; they are aware of the despair into which their deceit has plunged him; for now a terrible access of his malady comes on before their very eyes: if this access does not excite any remarkable sympathetic emotion in them, it can, at least, compel them to retire into themselves, to have respect for so much misery, and not to increase it by treachery. This the spectator expects, and finds his expectation fulfilled by the noble-minded Neoptolemus<sup>7</sup>. If Philoctetes had retained the mastery of his suffering, Neoptolemus would have retained the mastery of his dissimulation. Philoctetes, whose suffering makes him incapable of dissimulation, however necessary it may seem in order that the future companion of his travels may not repent of his promise to take him with him, Philoctetes, who is all nature, brings back Neoptolemus to his own nature. This return is excellent, and the more affecting as it is the result of pure humanity. In the French tragedy the fine eyes come into play<sup>8</sup>. But I will spend no more thought on this parody. In the *Trachiniae* Sophocles has made use of the same stroke of art, namely, of connecting with the sympathy excited by the scream of corporeal suffering another emotion in the spectator. The suffering of Hercules is not an exhausting suffering; it drives him to the verge of madness, in which he is snuffing up revenge and nothing else. Already he has in this rage seized upon Lichas and shattered him to pieces on the rocks. The Chorus is composed of women; it is all the more natural that fear and dread should

overpower them. This fact, and the waiting to see whether a god will yet hasten to the help of Hercules, or whether Hercules will sink under his affliction, cause the only general interest, to which sympathy contributes a very faint shading. So soon as the result is decided by the intelligence from the oracle, Hercules becomes tranquil, and astonishment at his last resolution takes the place of all other emotions. But it is especially necessary to remember, in comparing the suffering Hercules with the suffering Philoctetes, that the former is a demigod and the latter a man. The man is not ashamed of his lamentation, but the demigod is ashamed that his mortal part has so much influence over his immortal part as to make him whine and whimper like a girl<sup>9</sup>. We moderns do not believe in demigods, but yet the least hero with us must feel and act like a demigod.

Whether the actor can bring the scream and the contortions of pain so home to us as to create an illusion I will neither affirm nor deny. If I find that our actors cannot do this, I should wish first to know whether a Garrick<sup>10</sup> would not be capable of it, and if he should not succeed, should still remember that the scenic<sup>11</sup> apparatus and declamation of the ancients reached a perfection of which now-a-days we have no notion.

## CHAPTER V

THERE are connoisseurs of antiquity who hold indeed that the Laocoon group was the work of a Greek master, but of the time of the emperors, because they believe that the Virgilian Laocoon served as the model for it. Of all the ancient learned men who have been of this opinion I will only mention Bartholomew Marliani<sup>1</sup>; and of the modern, Montfaucon<sup>2</sup>. They found, without doubt, so remarkable an agreement between the work of art and the description of the poet that it appeared to them impossible that both should by accident have lighted upon the same circumstances, which certainly do not naturally suggest themselves. They further maintain that as to the honour attaching to the invention and first conception, the probability is much more in favour of the poet than the artist.

Only they appear to have forgotten that a third predicament is possible. For, perhaps, the poet has as little imitated the artist as the artist has the poet, but both have drawn their supply from the same ancient fountains. According to Macrobius<sup>3</sup>, the works of Pisander were these ancient sources. For while the works of this Greek poet were yet extant, it was a matter of school learning, *pueris decantatum*, that the Roman writer had not so much imitated as literally translated the whole conquest and destruction of Ilium, that is, his whole second book. If, moreover, Pisander had been Virgil's predecessor in the history of Laocoon, it was nevertheless not the custom of the Greek artists to derive their instruction from any Latin poet, and the conjecture drawn from the epoch rests on no foundation.

In the meanwhile, if I were compelled to maintain the opinion of Marliani and Montfaucon, I would offer them the following escape from the objection. The poems of Pisander are lost: how he told the story of Laocoon cannot certainly be said; but it is probable that it was narrated with the same circumstances of which we now find the traces in Greek authors. Now these do not in the least accord with the narrative of Virgil, but the Roman poet must have molten together the Greeks' traditions according to his good pleasure. The misfortune of Laocoon, as he narrates it, is his own invention. It follows that if the artists did agree in their representations with him they must have lived after his time and have worked after his model. Quintus<sup>4</sup> Calaber, it is true, like Virgil, makes Laocoon manifest a suspicion of the wooden horse; but the wrath of Minerva, which on this account he draws down upon himself, is very differently expressed by Virgil. The earth gapes under the forewarning Trojan. Terror and anxiety overtake him; burning anguish flames in his eyes; his brain is affected; he raves; he is blinded. Blind as he is, he ceases not to counsel the burning of the wooden horse, and then Minerva sends two dreadful serpents, which, however, only seize the children of Laocoon. In vain do these stretch out their hands to their father: the poor blind man cannot help them; they are torn to pieces, and the serpents disappear in the earth. To Laocoon they do no harm; and that this circumstance is not peculiar to Quintus<sup>5</sup>, but must rather be taken to be generally adopted, is evident from a passage in Lycophron, where these serpents<sup>6</sup> have the epithet of children-eaters. But if this incident had been generally accepted by the Greeks, Greek artists would scarcely have ventured to depart from it, and it could hardly have happened that they would have departed from it in the same manner as the Roman poet if they had not known him, and

had not received an express commission to work after his model. He who wishes to defend Marliani and Montfaucon must take up this position. Virgil<sup>7</sup> is the first and the only writer who makes the father as well as the children to be killed by the serpents. The sculptors do the same, though, as Greeks, they ought not to do it; it is therefore probable that they did it in imitation of Virgil. I know very well how much this probability falls short of historical certainty. But, although I do not wish to push further this conclusion from history, at least I think it may stand as an hypothesis upon which the critic may express his opinion. Be it proved or not proved that sculptors have not followed Virgil, I will assume the fact merely for the purpose of seeing how they have imitated him. I have already expressed my opinion as to the scream. Perhaps a further comparison may bring me to results not less instructive. The incident of binding the father through the coils of the devouring serpents into one knot with his two sons is unquestionably very happy, manifesting an uncommon picturesque imagination. Who invented it?—the poet, or the artist? Montfaucon is determined that it shall but be the poet<sup>8</sup>; but I think that Montfaucon has not read the poet with sufficient care.

Illi agmine certo

Laocoonta petunt, et primum parva duorum  
Corpora natorum serpens amplexus uterque  
Implicat, et miseros morsu depascitur artus.  
Post ipsum, auxilio subeuntem et tela ferentem  
Corripiunt spirisque ligant ingentibus<sup>9</sup>.

The poet has described the wonderful length of the serpents. They have entwined themselves round the boys, and when the father comes to their help they seize on him (*corripiunt*). Such is their size that they are not obliged for an instant to let go the boys; there must also be a moment when they have just fallen upon the father with their heads and foremost parts, and yet hold the children fast

by their hind parts, already twisted round them. This moment in the progress of the poetical picture is necessary—the poet makes us fully perceive it; but that was not the time to paint it in detail. That the old commentators were perfectly aware of this, appears probable from a passage<sup>10</sup> in Donatus<sup>11</sup>. How improbable it is that it would have escaped the artists to whose intelligent eye all that can be advantageously used so quickly and so clearly appears!

In the very windings of the serpents, which the poet entwines round Laocoon, he carefully avoids including the arms, in order to leave the arms full liberty of action.

*Ille simul manibus tendit divellere noles*<sup>12</sup>

In this the artist must necessarily follow him. Nothing gives more expression and life than the movement of the hands, especially in the representation of the passions; the most speaking countenance without it is insignificant. Arms fast bound to the body through the coils of the serpent would have spread coldness and death over the whole group. But we see them in the principal figure, as well as in the accessory figures, in full activity, and there most employed where for the present the pain is greatest<sup>13</sup>.

But the artist found nothing except this freedom of the arms from the coils of the serpents useful to borrow from the poet. Virgil makes the serpents wind themselves in double coils round the body and the neck of Laocoon, and tower high above him with their heads.

*Bis medium amplexi, bis collo squamea circum  
Terga dati, superant capite et cervicibus altis*<sup>14</sup>

This figure admirably fills our imagination. The noblest parts of the body are compressed even to suffocation, and the poison is carried directly into the face. Nevertheless, the figure is not one for the artist who wishes to show the working of the

poison and of the pain in the body. For, in order to make these conspicuous, the principal parts must be left as free as possible, and throughout no external pressure must operate upon them which would change and weaken the play of the suffering nerves and working muscles. The double coils of the serpents would have covered the whole body, and that agonised contraction of the lower part of the body, which is so expressive, would have remained invisible. Whatever parts of the body, above, below, or between the coils could be seen, would appear amid the pressure and the distension not to have been caused by pain within, but by weight without. The neck enclosed in such repeated folds would have entirely lost that pyramidal termination of the group<sup>15</sup> which is so agreeable to the eye; and the summits of the serpents' heads stretching out of these folds into the air would have made so sudden a falling off of proportion that the shape of the whole would have been extremely repulsive. There are, nevertheless, artists who are so unintelligent as to follow servilely the poet. We recognise with horror the consequences, to take one of several instances, from a print of Frank Cleyn<sup>16</sup>. The old sculptors saw with a glance that their art in this respect required an entire alteration. They transferred all the coils from the body and neck to the thighs and feet. Here the coils, without injury to the expression, could cover and bind as much as was necessary. Here arose the idea of an impeded flight and of a kind of immovability, which is very favourable to the idea produced by Art, of permanence in one and the same condition.

I know not how it has happened that the artists have passed over in complete silence this difference in the coils of the serpents which so plainly appears between the works of the artist and the description of the poet. It exalts the wisdom of the artist quite as much as other things which they all seize



upon, but which they do not so much venture to praise as seek to excuse. I mean the difference as to the dress. Virgil's Laocoon is in his priestly robes, and he appears in the group with both his sons quite naked. It is said that there are persons who find a gross absurdity in representing a king's son, a priest at his sacrifice, as naked, and to these persons the connoisseurs reply in sober earnestness that it is certainly an unusually grave fault, but that the artist was constrained to commit it because his figures could have no becoming dress. Statuary, they say, cannot imitate any stuff. Thick folds have a bad effect. Of two inconveniences the least must be chosen, and it is better to run counter to the truth than to be subject to blame for the drapery<sup>17</sup>. The old artists would have laughed at this reproach, but I do not know what they would have said to the answer. It is impossible to degrade Art to a lower depth than by these means. For let it be granted that sculpture can imitate stuffs of different kinds as well as painting, must Laocoon have therefore necessarily been clothed? Should we lose nothing by the adoption of this clothing? Has a garment, the work of<sup>18</sup> servile hands, as much beauty as the work of eternal wisdom, the organised body? Does it require the same capacity, —is there the same merit,—does it confer the same honour, to imitate the one as the other? Do our eyes only require to be deceived, and is it all the same to them wherewith they are deceived? With the poet a garment is no garment: it covers nothing: our imagination sees entirely through it. Let the Laocoon of Virgil either have it or have it not, his suffering is as visible in one part of his body as in the other. The forehead is bound by the priestly fillet, but is not veiled by it. Nay, this fillet hides nothing, absolutely nothing: it only strengthens the idea which we form of the misfortune of the sufferer.

The priestly dignity nothing avails him. The very emblem of it, which everywhere procures for him respect and honour, is thoroughly defiled and desecrated by the poisonous saliva. But the artist must abandon this subordinate idea if the principal work is not to suffer. If he had left even this fillet to Laocoon, he would greatly have weakened the expression<sup>20</sup>. The forehead would have been covered, and the forehead is the seat of expression. As in the matter of screaming he sacrificed expression to beauty, so here he sacrifices what is conventional to expression. With the ancients what is conventional was considered a very small thing. They felt that the highest end of their art led them entirely to dispense with it. Beauty is their highest end. Necessity invented clothes. What has Art to do with necessity?<sup>21</sup> I grant that there is a kind of beauty in apparel, but what is it when put in competition with the human form? And shall he who can attain the greater be content with the less? I much fear that the most perfect painter of dress shows by this very dexterity in what he is really wanting.

## CHAPTER VI

My supposition that the artists have imitated the poet in no way depreciates the former. Rather does their wisdom in this imitation appear in the very best light. They follow the poet without allowing themselves to be in the slightest particular corrupted by him. They have a model, but as to the mode of transferring this model from one art to the other they have ample scope to think for themselves ; and the original ideas which they manifest in their departures from the model demonstrate that they are as great in their Art as he in his.

Now, I will reverse this supposition : the poet shall have imitated the artists. There are learned men who maintain this proposition as a truth<sup>1</sup>. I do not know that they have any historical grounds for so doing ; but finding this work of Art overwhelmingly beautiful, they cannot persuade themselves that it belongs to a later epoch. It must belong to that time when Art was in its most perfect bloom, because it deserves to belong to it.

It has been shown that, however excellent Virgil's picture may be, nevertheless there are several features in it of which the artist could not avail himself. This proposition is also subject to limitations.

That a good poetical painting must make a really good picture, and that the poet has painted well only so far as the artist can follow him in all his details. We are disposed to take for granted this limitation, before we see it confirmed by examples. Simply from a consideration of the wider sphere of Poetry, of the unbounded field of our imagination,

of the immateriality of its images, which can stand side by side in the greatest multitude and multiplicity, without the one concealing or injuring the other, just as the things themselves, or the natural signs of them, in the narrow limits of space or time, would stand.

If, however, the less cannot contain the greater, the less can be contained in the greater, or I will put it thus: although not every trait which the painting poet uses can produce as good an effect on canvas or in marble, yet perhaps every trait of the artist may produce as good an effect in the work of the poet? Certainly; for that which we discover to be beautiful in a work of art is not discovered by our eye, but by the force of our imagination, through the eye. The same form may, moreover, be excited in our imagination by arbitrary or by natural signs, and, each time, the same pleasure, though not in the same degree, will arise<sup>2</sup>.

All this being granted, I must confess that, to me, the proposition that Virgil has imitated the artist appears much more unintelligible than the opposite proposition. If the artist followed the poet I can give a reason and can account for all his deviations from him. He must deviate from him if the very traits of the poet would have caused improprieties in his work which they do not produce in that of the poet. But why must the poet deviate? If he had copied the group faithfully in all its parts, would he not have delivered to us an excellent picture?<sup>3</sup> I quite understand how his fancy working for himself could bring him to this or that trait: but the causes why his judgment was obliged to change the traits of beauty before his eyes into these other traits are by no means apparent to me.

It seems to me that<sup>4</sup> if Virgil had had the group for his model, he would hardly have so far restrained himself as to have left us to conjecture that all the three bodies were entwined in one

knot. They would have been placed in too lively a representation before his eyes, and he would have found the effect resulting from them too excellent not to have given them a more conspicuous place in his description. I have said that it was not then the moment to paint in detail this entwining. No; but one single word more would have produced, perhaps, a very marked effect even in the shadow in which the poet was obliged to leave it. What the artist would, without this word, have revealed, the poet, if he had seen it in the work of the artist, would not have left without this word.

The artist had the most urgent reasons for not allowing the anguish of Laocoon to burst forth into a scream. If, however, the poet had had before him so affecting a combination of pain and beauty in the work of art, what could have so irresistibly compelled him to leave altogether unexpressed the idea of manly demeanour and magnanimous patience, which arises out of this combination of pain and beauty, and to shock us at once with the ghastly screaming of his Laocoon? Richardson says: 'Virgil's Laocoon must scream because the poet does not wish so much to excite pity for him as horror and dismay in the Trojans'. I will grant, although Richardson does not seem to have considered it, that the poet does not make the description in his own proper person, but causes Aeneas to make it, and to make it in the presence of Dido, whose sympathy Aeneas was eager to take by storm. But it is not the scream which so much surprises me as the want of all gradation up to this scream to which the work of the artist would naturally have led the poet, if he had, as has been assumed, taken it for his model. Richardson remarks<sup>6</sup>: 'The history of Laocoon is intended only to lead up to a pathetic description of the final destruction of the city; the poet, therefore, did not intend to make Laocoon too interesting, in order not to dissipate, through the misfortune of

one individual citizen, the attention which this last night of horrors ought to concentrate upon itself'. But this is arbitrarily to consider the matter from the one moment of a painter's view, from which it ought not to be considered at all. The misfortune of Laocoon and the destruction of the city are not intended by the poet to be two pictures, one next to the other; they do not both together make one whole, so that our eye may or ought to overlook both at the same moment; and on no other hypothesis would it be desirable that our glance should rather light upon Laocoon than upon the burning city. Both descriptions follow one upon the other, and I do not see what advantage accrues to the one which follows, from the fact that the one which precedes has so very greatly affected us. It would show that the one which followed did not, in itself, sufficiently affect our feelings. Still less motive would the poet have had to alter the coils of the serpents. In the work of Art they occupy the hands and bind the feet. So pleasing to the eye is this distribution, so lively is the picture which remains of it in the imagination. It is so distinct and clear that it can be represented by words not much more feebly than by natural signs :

Micat alter, et ipsum  
Laocoonta petit, totumque infraque supraque  
Implicat et rapido tandem ferit ilia morsu  
At serpens lapsu crebro redeunte subintrat  
Lubricus, intortoque ligat genua iustina nodo 6

These are the lines of Sadolet, which would doubtless have been produced with yet more picturesque-ness by Virgil if a visible model had kindled his fancy, and which would then certainly have been better than what he now gives us in their place<sup>7</sup> :

Bis medium amplexi, bis collo squamea circum  
Terga dati, superant capite et cervicibus altis

These traits entirely fill our imagination; but

our imagination must not tarry there, it must not seek to analyse them, it must at one time see only the serpents, at another time only the Laocoon ; it must not represent to us the effect which both together create. So far as it attempts to do this the Virgilian picture begins to be displeasing, and to be highly unpicturesque.

If, however, the alterations which Virgil would have made in the model presented to him would have been happy, they would still have been purely arbitrary. We imitate in order to produce resemblance ; can we produce resemblance when we make alterations beyond the necessity of the case ? Rather when this is done it is clear that we did not intend to produce a resemblance because we have not imitated. It may be replied, No, not the whole, but this or that part. Good. Still, what are then these individual parts which, in the description of the poet and in the work of the artist, so closely harmonize as to make the poet appear to have borrowed the former from the latter ? The father, the children, the serpents were all furnished by history to the poet, as well as to the artist. Apart from history they agree in nothing but in this, that the children and the father were entwined in one serpent knot. But their harmony in this respect sprang from the altered version, that the very same misfortune which had smitten the father smote the children. But this alteration, as has been already said, Virgil appears to have made, for the Greek tradition is quite different. It follows that if in regard to this common fact of entwining there has been an imitation on the one side or the other, it may be presumed with greater probability to be on the side of the artist than of the poet. In all other respects the one differs from the other, only with this distinction, that if it is the artist that has made the deviation, his intention to imitate the poet may still be maintained, inasmuch as the vocation and the limits of his art constrained

him to make this deviation ; if, on the other hand, the poet be thought to have imitated the artist, then all the deviations which have been mentioned disprove this supposed imitation, and those who notwithstanding maintain it, can only mean that the work of Art is older than the poem.



## CHAPTER VII

WHEN it is said that the artist imitates the poet, or the poet imitates the artist, this mode of speech may have a twofold meaning. Either the one makes the work of the other the real object of his imitation, or they have both the same object of imitation, and the one borrows from the other the manner and style of imitation. When Virgil describes the shield of Aeneas, he imitates in the first meaning the artist who has made the shield. The work of Art, not that which is represented in the work of Art, is the object of his imitation ; and if he also describes what is seen to be represented thereon, he describes it as a part of the shield, not as the shield itself. If Virgil, on the other hand, had imitated the group of Laocoon, this would have been an imitation in the second meaning. For he would not have imitated this group, but what this group represents, and would have borrowed from it only the details of his imitation.

In the first imitation the poet is original, in the second he is a copyist. The first is a part of general imitation which constitutes the essence of his art, and he works at it as a genius, whether he takes his object from another art or from nature. The second, on the contrary, altogether degrades him from his dignity : he imitates, instead of the thing itself, the imitations of it, and gives us cold reminiscences of the traits of a foreign genius, instead of original traits of his own<sup>1</sup>.

As, however, the poet and the artist treat the circumstances which they have in common, not unfrequently, from the same point of view ; then it cannot but happen that these imitations in many

portions must, without there having been the least idea of imitation or of emulation, resemble each other. These concurrences may lead contemporaneous artists and poets to mutual explanations as to things which are no longer present to us. But to push these explanations to the extent of converting accident into intention, and especially to impute to the poet that in every trifling detail he had reference to this statue or that picture, is to render him a very doubtful service; and not only him, but also the reader to whom they make the most beautiful passage very clear, if you will, but excessively cold. This is the object and the mistake of a celebrated English work. Spence wrote his *Polymetis*<sup>2</sup> with much classical erudition, and with a very trustworthy acquaintance with the works of ancient Art which remain to us. He has often accomplished with success his design of illustrating, by means of these, the Roman poets; and, on the other hand, of extracting from the poets explanations as to unexplained works of ancient Art. But notwithstanding I maintain that, to every reader of taste, his book must be absolutely intolerable.

It is natural that when Valerius Flaccus describes the winged lightning on the Roman shields

*Nec primus radios, miles Romane, corusci  
Fulminis, et rutilas scutis diffuderis alas*

this description should become more intelligible to me when I see the form of such shield upon an ancient monument<sup>3</sup>. It may be<sup>4</sup> that Mars was represented in that hovering attitude, in which Addison thought he saw him over Rhea on a coin; and was also represented by the ancient armourers upon the helmets and shields; and that Juvenal had such a helmet or shield in his thoughts when he alluded to it in a word which, up to the time of Addison, had been a riddle to all interpreters. It appears to me that when I consider the passage in



tion of the painter?<sup>8</sup> Or if another poet speaks of Vulcan wearied, and of his red countenance glowing from the forge, must he learn from the work of the painter that toil wearies, and heat inflames?<sup>9</sup> Or when Lucretius describes the changes of the seasons, and leads them forth in their natural order, with the whole train of their effects in the sky and on the earth, was Lucretius an Ephemeron? Had he never lived through a whole year, so as himself to have experienced all these changes, so that he is obliged to paint them in imitation of a procession in which the statues of them would be borne round? Must he first learn from these statues the old poetical idea of Art of making the *abstracta*<sup>10</sup> actual existences?<sup>11</sup> Or Virgil's *pontem indignatus Araxes*, that admirable poetical image of a stream overflowing its banks as it tears asunder the bridge thrown over it, would it not have lost its entire beauty if the poet had alluded to a work of Art in which the River God was represented as having actually torn the bridge in pieces?<sup>12</sup> What have we to do with such illustrations as these, which dispossess the poet of his brightest passages, in order that the idea of the artist may shine through them?

I lament that so useful a book as Polymetis otherwise would have been, should, through this tasteless whim of substituting for the natural fancy of the old poets one derived from another Art, have become so repulsive and so much more injurious to classical authors than the watery commentaries of the most insipid etymologist could ever have been. Still more do I lament that in this respect Spence should have been preceded by Addison, who, out of a laudable desire to raise the knowledge of ancient works of Art to the standard of a mean of interpretation, has so little discriminated the cases in which the imitation of the artist is becoming to the poet, and those in which it is derogatory.

## CHAPTER VIII

OF the mutual resemblance which subsists between Poetry and Painting, Spence has the most extraordinary notions. He thinks that both arts, in the opinion of the ancients, were so closely bound together that they went hand in hand, and the poet never lost sight of the painter, nor the painter of the poet. That Poetry is the more comprehensive Art, that its beauties are subject to laws which Painting cannot reach, that there may often be reasons for preferring unpicturesque to picturesque beauties he seems never to have considered, and is therefore, when the least difference occurs, in the greatest perplexity, which makes him have recourse to the most marvellous shifts in the world.

The ancient poets for the most part gave Bacchus horns. It is therefore strange that Spence so seldom sees these horns on his statues<sup>1</sup>. He has recourse to all kinds of reasons for this, to the ignorance of antiquaries, to the smallness of the horns themselves, which might have crept in amid grapes and ivy leaves. He goes round and round the real reason without suspecting it. The horns of Bacchus were no natural horns, as those of the fawns and satyrs were. They were an ornament to the forehead, which he could take off and lay aside.

*Tibi cum sine cornibus adtas  
Virgineum caput est*

says Ovid<sup>2</sup> in his solemn invocation of Bacchus. He could also be seen without horns when he wished to appear in the beauty of his youth. In this beauty the artists desired to represent him, and would therefore have avoided all accessories

which could have produced a bad effect. Such an accessory, horns, which were fastened to the diadem, would have been, as can be seen on a head in the Royal Cabinet at Berlin<sup>3</sup>. Such an accessory was the diadem itself, which covered the beautiful forehead, and therefore is as seldom found in the statues of Bacchus as the horns, although the former is so often ascribed to him as the inventor by the poets. The horns and the diadem furnished the poets with subtle allusions to the acts and character of the god. To the artist, on the other hand, these were hindrances to the display of greater beauties; and if Bacchus had, as I believe, the additional name of Biformis, Διμόρφος, because he could appear terrible as well as beautiful; then it was quite natural that the artist should prefer to choose that form which was most in harmony with the end of his Art.

In the works of the Roman poets, Minerva and Juno often hurl the thunderbolt. But why not also in the paintings in which they are represented? says Spence<sup>4</sup>. He answers: it was a particular privilege of these two goddesses, the reason for which is perhaps to be found, originally, in the Samothracian mysteries. But, as among the ancient Romans, artists were considered as common people, and were therefore seldom admitted to these mysteries, they doubtless knew nothing about this, and what they did not know they could not represent. I might ask Spence, on the other hand: Did these common people work at their own suggestion or at the command of persons in higher life, who could be informed of these mysteries? Were the artists as contemptuously considered by the Greeks? Were not the Roman artists born Greeks? and so on.

Statius and Valerius Flaccus<sup>5</sup> paint an enraged Venus, and with such terrible features, that for the moment she might be taken for a Fury rather than the Goddess of Love. Spence looks in vain in the ancient works of Art for such a Venus. What is

his conclusion? That a greater latitude is allowed to the poet than the sculptor or painter? This is the conclusion which he ought to have drawn; but he has taken it as a fundamental principle once for all that in poetical description nothing is good which would be unbecoming if represented in a statue or a picture. It follows that the poets who have done this have erred<sup>6</sup>. Statius and Valerius, he says, belong to an epoch when Roman poetry was already declining<sup>7</sup>. They manifest in this matter a corrupted taste and a bad judgment<sup>8</sup>. In the poets of a better epoch you will not find such an offence against picturesque expression.

This sort of remark requires very little power of discrimination. I will not, however, undertake the defence of Statius or of Valerius in this matter, but content myself with a general observation. The gods and spiritual beings, as represented by the artist, are not entirely the same as those whom the poet makes use of. To the artist they are personified *abstracta*, which must always maintain the same characteristics if they are to be recognised. To the poet, on the other hand, they are real acting creatures, which, in addition to their general character, have other qualities and affections, which, as circumstances afford the opportunity, predominate. To the sculptor Venus is nothing but love: he must give her all the decent modest beauty, all the sweet charms, which enchant us in the object of our love, and which we therefore bring with us to our consideration of the abstract idea of love. The least deviation from this ideal prevents our recognition of her image.

Beauty, attended by more majesty than shame, is no Venus, but a Juno. Charms rather more imperious and masculine than sweet give us a Minerva instead of a Venus. An angry Venus, a Venus agitated by revenge and wrath, is, in the eyes of the sculptor, a perfect contradiction: for love as love is neither angry nor revengeful. But

with the poet, on the other hand, Venus is indeed also love, but the goddess of love, who besides this character has an individuality of her own, and must in consequence be as capable of aversion as of affection. What marvel, then, that in his work she burns with rage and fury, especially where it is injured love itself which excites them in her !

It is indeed true that the artist also, as well as the poet, can introduce into his groups Venus or any other goddess as a really acting being, in addition to her general character. But then her actions must at least not contradict her character, even if they are no immediate consequences of it. Venus delivers to her son the divine weapons : the artist as well as the poet can represent this action. There is nothing in it which hinders him from giving Venus all the grace and beauty which belong to her as goddess of love : rather by this act is she the more easily recognised. But when Venus wishes to revenge herself on the men of Lemnos, who have scorned her, and in the form of a magnified fury, with spotted cheeks, disordered hair, seizes upon a torch, throws a black garment around her, and departs in a storm, borne upon a dark cloud : that is no moment for the artist to choose, because in this moment he has no power to make the goddess recognised. It is a moment only for the poet, because he has the privilege of connecting with it so closely and so nearly another form in which the goddess is altogether Venus, so that even in the fury we do not lose sight of Venus. This is what Flaccus does :

Neque enim alma videri  
Jam tunc : aut tereti crinem subnectitur auro  
Sidereos diffusa sinus. Eadem effera et ingens  
Et maculis suffecta genas<sup>8</sup> : pinumque sonantem  
Virginibus Stygiis, nigramque simillima pallam<sup>9</sup>

This also Statius does :

Illa Paphon veterem centumque altaria linquens,  
Nec vultu nec crine prior, solvisse jugalem



Ceston, et Idalias procul ablegasse volucres  
 Fertur. Erant certe, media qui noctis in umbra  
 Divain alios ignes majoraque tela gerentem,  
 Tartarias inter thalamis volitasse sorores  
 Vulgarent: utque implicitis arcana domorum  
 Angulibus, et saeva formidine cuncta replevit  
 Linaia 10

In other words, it may be said that the poet alone possesses the artificial power of painting with negative traits, and, by the mingling of negative with positive feature, of bringing two appearances into one. No more the sweet Venus; no more the hair fastened with golden clasps; no azure garment floating round; without any girdle; with flames of another kind; armed with heavy arrows; in the company of furies like herself. But while the artist must lack this power, shall the poet abstain from that which he has? If Painting will be the sister of Poetry, at least let her be no envious sister, and let not the younger deny the elder all the robes which she cannot wear herself.

## CHAPTER IX

WHEN we compare the painter and poet with each other in particular instances, it is above all things necessary to observe carefully whether both have had their full liberty, whether, free from all external compulsion, they have been able to bring their art to its highest pitch.

Religion not unfrequently operated as such an external compulsion to the ancient artist. His work, destined to promote worship and devotion, could not always be as perfect as if it had for its single object the satisfaction of the spectator. Superstition overloaded the gods with emblems, and the most beautiful among them were not universally esteemed as the most beautiful<sup>1</sup>. Bacchus stood in his temple at Lemnos, from which the pious Hypsipile saved her father, under the likeness of the god, with horns<sup>2</sup>, and so undoubtedly he appeared in all his temples, for the horns were an emblem which denoted his existence. It was only the free artist, who did not sculpture his Bacchus for any temple, who could leave out this symbol; and when among the statues which have survived we find none with horns<sup>3</sup>, this is perhaps a proof that these were not in the category of consecrated statues under the form of which he was really worshipped. It is, at all events, highly probable that upon such the wrath of the pious destroyers in the first centuries of Christianity especially fell, which only here and there spared works of art unpolluted by worship<sup>4</sup>.

As, however, among the excavated antiques some are to be found which belong to both kinds, I could wish that we ~~only~~ appropriated the name of works

of art to those in which the artist could alone show himself as an artist, in which beauty had been his first and last object. Everything else in which marked traces of aptitude for devotional purposes are shown does not deserve this name, inasmuch as in these the Art has not laboured for its own sake, but merely as an aid to religion, and in the sensible representations presented by it has had in view rather the significant than the beautiful, although I do not mean to say that she has not often included all that was significant in what was beautiful, or out of regard for the Art, and the finer taste of the century, has not left out so much of the significant as would allow beauty to be the dominant feature.

Without such a distinction as this, the connoisseur and the antiquary would be perpetually at variance, from mutual misunderstanding, with each other. If the former, according to his insight into the vocation of the Art, maintains that the ancient artist has never done this or that, that is, not as artist, not of his own free will, the latter will go further and maintain that neither religion nor any cause lying outside the domain of Art had made the artist do this, that is, the artist considered as a mere worker with his hand—and so the antiquarian will believe that he has been able to contradict the artist by producing the first figure that he found, which the artist without scruple, but to the great disgust of the learned world, condemns to the heap of rubbish from which it was taken<sup>6</sup>.

On the other hand, it is possible to lay too great a stress upon the influence of religion over Art. Spence affords a remarkable instance of this. He found in Ovid that Vesta was not worshipped in her temple under any personal image, and this fact he thought sufficient to warrant the conclusion that there had been no images of this goddess, and that whatever had hitherto been holden to be such was not a Vesta but a Vestal<sup>6</sup>. A marvellous conclusion ! Did. the artist lose his right with regard to that

being to whom the poets had given a definite personality, making her the daughter of Saturn and Ops, fall into dangers, be subject to the ill treatment of Priapus, and all that is said on this subject,—did he, I say, lose his right to personify this being according to his own art because in one temple it was only worshipped under the emblem of fire? For Spence also commits this fault, that he extends what Ovid says of a particular temple of Vesta, namely, of the one at Rome, without discrimination, to all temples<sup>7</sup> of this goddess, and to her worship generally. She was not universally worshipped as she was in this temple at Rome: she was, indeed, not worshipped at all in Italy before Numa built her a temple. Numa would not allow any divinity to be represented in human or animal form; and herein doubtless consisted the improvement which he introduced into the worship of Vesta, namely, in forbidding all personal representations of her. Ovid himself teaches us that before the time of Numa there were images of Vesta in her temples, which, when her priestess Sylvia became a mother, lifted up from shame their virgin hands before their eyes<sup>8</sup>. As to the temples which the goddess had without the city in the Roman provinces, that her worship was not fully conducted in the manner which Numa had prescribed appears to follow from certain ancient inscriptions in which mention was made of a *Pontificis Vestae*<sup>9</sup>. Also at Corinth there was a temple of Vesta without any images, with a bare altar on which sacrifices were offered to the goddess<sup>10</sup>. But does it follow that the Greeks had no statues of Vesta? At Athens there was one, in the Prytaneum, near the statue of Peace<sup>11</sup>. The people of Jasos boasted of one which stood under the open sky, and upon which neither snow nor rain ever fell<sup>12</sup>. Pliny mentions a sitting one wrought by the hand of Scopas, which, in his time, he found at Rome in the Servilian Gardens. Let it be conceded that it is difficult to distinguish a mere

Vestal from a Vesta, does this prove that they were not distinguished by the ancients, or that they would not distinguish them? Certain attributes declare more plainly for the one than the other. The sceptre, the torch, the palladium, can only be surmised to have been in the hands of the goddess. The tympanum which Codinus attributes to her perhaps belonged to her only as representing the earth ; or Codinus may not have rightly understood what he saw<sup>13</sup>.

## CHAPTER X

I MUST notice an expression of wonder on the part of Spence which clearly shows how little he must have reflected upon the boundaries of Poetry and Painting.

As<sup>1</sup> to the Muses in general, it is remarkable that the poets say but little of them, in a descriptive way ; much less than might be expected for deities, to whom they were so particularly obliged.

What is this but to wonder that the poet, when he speaks of them, does not employ the dumb speech of the painter ? Urania is among poets the muse of astronomy : from her name and her functions we recognise her office. The artist, in order to make this intelligible, must explain them with a staff upon a globe. This staff, this globe, this position, are his alphabet out of which he composes for us the name of Urania. But when the poet wishes 'o say : 'Urania has long ago foretold his death from the stars'

Ipsa diu inspectis letum prædixerat astris  
Uranic<sup>2</sup>

why should he, having regard to the painter, add, 'Urania, with her *radius* in her hand, the celestial globe before her ?' Would it not be much the same as if a man, who can and ought to speak aloud, were nevertheless to employ the signs which the mutes in a Turkish seraglio for want of voice have invented ? Spence expresses the same wonder even at these moral beings, or those divinities who, according to the ancients, preside over the virtues and conduct of human life<sup>3</sup>.

It is observable, he says, that the Roman poets say less of the best of the moral beings than might be expected.

The artists are much fuller on this head ; and one who would settle what appearances each of them made should go to the medals of the Roman emperors. . . . They speak of them often as persons ; but they do not generally say much of their attributes or dress, or the appearance they make.

When the poet personifies *abstracta*, they are sufficiently characterised by their names, and by what he causes them to do. To the artist these means are wanting. He is obliged, therefore, to attach emblems, through which they may be understood, to his personified *abstracta*. These emblems, because they are somewhat different, and signify something different, make the figures allegorical.

A woman<sup>4</sup> with a bridle in her hand, another leaning on a pillar, are in Art allegorical beings. But moderation, stedfastness, are with the poet no allegorical persons, but only personified *abstracta*.

The emblems of these beings, as employed by the artist, were the invention of necessity. For by no other means can he make intelligible what this or the other figure signifies. Necessity constrains the artist, but why should the poet, who knows no such necessity, be compelled to have recourse to it ?

That which surprises Spence so much ought to be prescribed as a rule to the poets. They ought not to make their wealth out of the needs of the Artist. They are not to consider the means which Art has invented in order to come near to Poetry as perfections of which they have reason to be envious. When the artist decorates a figure with emblems, he elevates a bare figure into a higher order of being. But if the poet employs this picturesque apparel of the painter, he turns his higher being into a doll.

As the observance of this rule was characteristic of the ancients, so is the intentional transgression of it a favourite fault of the modern poets. All the creatures of their imagination walk in masks, and those who best understand these masquerades for the most part, understand the least the true end of

their work, namely, to let all the beings of their creation act, and by means of their actions display their character.

Yet among the attributes by which the artists designate their *abstracta*, there is a class which is more susceptible and more worthy of poetic use. I mean those attributes which are not, properly speaking, allegorical, but which may be considered as instruments, which the beings to whom they are given can and may, if they were to act as real persons, use. The bridle in the hand of Temperance, the pillar on which Steadfastness leans, are purely allegorical, and of no use to the poet. The scales in the hand of Justice are less open to this objection, because the right use of the scales is really a part of Justice. The lyre or the flute in the hand of a Muse, the lance in the hand of Mars, hammer and tongs in the hands of Vulcan, are in no respect emblems, but simply instruments, without which these beings cannot produce the effects which we ascribe to them. Of this kind are the attributes which the ancient poets sometimes interweave in their descriptions, and which on this account, in order to distinguish them from the allegorical class, I would call poetical. The latter signify the thing itself, the former only something resembling it<sup>6</sup>.



## CHAPTER XI

EVEN Count Caylus seems to require that the poet shall adorn the creatures of his imagination with allegorical attributes<sup>1</sup>. The Count understood Painting better than Poetry. Nevertheless, the work in which he expresses this desire has suggested to me higher considerations, the more important of which I here notice for the purpose of deliberately examining them.

The artist, according to the Count's opinion, should make himself more familiar with the greatest painter-poets<sup>2</sup>, with Homer as with a second nature. The Count points out to the artist what rich and insufficiently-used materials for the most excellent painting, history, as treated by the Greeks, can supply, and how his execution as an artist will be the more perfect the more closely he attends to the least circumstances which are noticed by the poet.

In this proposition the two kinds of imitation which we have just separated are mixed together. The painter (it is here suggested) should not only imitate what the poet has imitated, but he should also imitate it in the same traits ; he should use the poet not only as a narrator, but as a poet.

But why should this second kind of imitation, which is so derogatory to the poet, not also be so to the painter ? If there had been present to Homer such a series of pictures as Count Caylus derives from him, and we knew that the poet had taken his work from these pictures ; would not our admiration of him be immeasurably lessened ? How does it happen that we withdraw none of our high esteem from the artist, when he does no more than express the words of the poem in forms and colours ?

The cause appears to be this: With the artist execution appears to be more difficult than invention. With the poet, on the other hand, the case seems to be reversed, and his execution appears to be an easier achievement than his invention. If Virgil had taken the entwining of Laocoon and his children from the group of the sculptor, then that merit which, in his work, we hold to be the greatest and most considerable, would be wanting, and the lesser merit alone remain. For to create this entwining in the imagination is a far greater achievement than the expression of it in words. On the other hand, if the artist had borrowed this entwining from the poet he would still, in our estimation, have attained sufficient merit, although the merit of invention would have been wanting. For expression in marble is infinitely more difficult than expression in words; and when we weigh against each other invention and representation, we are always inclined to make allowance to the artist for what he is wanting in one respect, accordingly as we think that he has exceeded in another. There are, indeed, cases in which it is a greater merit in the artist to have imitated nature through the medium of the poet than without it.

The painter who, in imitation of the description of a Thomson, has represented a beautiful landscape, has done more than one who has copied directly from nature. The latter sees the original picture before him, the former must first strengthen his power of imagination until he believes that he sees the picture before him. The former, out of a lively impression on the senses, creates something beautiful; the latter, out of a slender and feeble representation of arbitrary signs, produces the same result.

But natural as our readiness to allow the artist the merit of invention may be, not less natural is it that an indifference should arise on his part to this kind of merit. For seeing that invention could not

be his brilliant side, and that his greatest praise depended on execution, it was almost a matter of indifference to him whether the invention was old or new, used once or an indefinite number of times, whether it belonged to him or to another. He remained within the limited circle of a few subjects, generally well known to himself and the public, and expended his whole power of invention upon merely effecting changes in them by new combinations of old objects. This is really the idea which the painters' elementary books connect with the word invention. For although they divide it into picturesque and poetical, the poetical is not concerned with producing the design itself, but simply with the arrangement or expression<sup>3</sup>. It is invention, but not the invention of the whole, but of particular portions and of their relative position. It is invention, but of that inferior kind which Horace recommends to his tragic poet :

Tuque  
*Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus*  
*Quam si proferres ignota indictaque primus* <sup>4</sup>

Recommended, I say, but not commanded; recommended as easier, more becoming to, more advantageous for him; but not commanded as better and nobler in itself.

In fact, the poet has made a great step in advance, who has treated of known history and known characters. He can pass over a hundred cold details which would otherwise be necessary for the understanding of the whole subject; and the sooner he becomes intelligible to his audience the more speedily will they be interested in him. The painter also possesses this advantage, when his design is not strange to us, when at the first glance we recognise the intention and meaning of his entire composition; when we, in one word, not only see his characters speak, but also hear what they say. The principal effect depends upon the first glance, and when this

compels us to have recourse to wearisome reflections and deliberations, our desire to be interested grows cold ; and in order to revenge ourselves upon the unintelligent artist, we harden ourselves against the expression ; and woe to him, if he has sacrificed beauty to expression ! In that case we find nothing to entice us to linger over his work : what we see does not please us, and what we ought to think about it we do not know.

Now, let us take the two propositions together : first, that the invention<sup>6</sup> and novelty of subject are by no means the principal things which we require from the painter ; secondly, that a well-known subject forwards and assists the effect of his art ; and I think that the reason why he so seldom undertakes a new subject is not, as Count Caylus supposes, for the sake of his own convenience, or on account of his ignorance, or on account of the difficulty of the mechanical part of the Art, which requires all his industry and all his time ; but the reason has a deeper foundation, and perhaps what at first sight appears to be a limitation imposed on his art, and a diminution of our satisfaction, we should rather be inclined to praise as a wise and intrinsically useful restraint on the part of the artist himself. I am not afraid of being contradicted on this point by experience. The painter would thank the Count for his goodwill, but would scarcely avail himself of it so generally as he expects. But if it were otherwise, then every hundred years a new Caylus would be necessary to recall to our recollection the old subjects, and bring back the artist into that field where others before him had failed to gain immortality for their laurels. Or is it desired that the public should have the same learning which the connoisseur derives from his books, that all the scenes of history and of fable which could furnish a beautiful picture should be familiarly known to it ? I grant that the artists would have done better if, since the time of Raffaello, they had taken Homer

for their hand-book instead of Ovid. But as that has not once happened, we must leave the public in the beaten path, and not put more acid into its pleasure than in the nature of things pleasure itself requires.

Protogenes had painted the mother of Aristotle. I do not know how much the philosopher paid him for it, but either instead of payment, or over and above his payment, he gave him a piece of advice, which was worth more than the payment. For I cannot fancy that his advice was mere flattery. But because he considered that the principal requisite of Art was to be intelligible to all, he advised him to paint the exploits of Alexander; exploits of which at that time all the world was speaking, and which he could foresee would not be forgotten by posterity. But Protogenes was not steady enough to follow this advice. '*Impetus animi*,' says Pliny, '*et quaedam artis libido*'<sup>6</sup>—a certain insolence of art, a certain craving after the strange and the unknown, drove him into entirely different subjects. He preferred to paint the history of a certain Ialysus<sup>7</sup> and of a certain Cydippe, and of others of the same character, as to which paintings we can no longer conjecture what they were intended to represent.

## CHAPTER XII

HOMER creates two classes of beings and of actions, visible and invisible. Painting is incompetent to represent this difference; with it everything is visible, and visible after one fashion only.

When the Count Caylus places the invisible actions in unbroken sequence with the visible, when in these pictures of mixed actions in which visible and invisible beings take their part, he does not indicate, and perhaps cannot indicate, how the latter (which only we who consider the picture can discover in it) are so to be brought into relation with the former, that the persons in the picture do not see them, or at least must of necessity not appear to see them,—then also of necessity the whole series of the pictures, as well as many isolated portions of it, become extremely perplexing, unintelligible, and contradictory.

Yet it would be possible, with the book in one's hand, to remedy this fault. The worst consequence is this, that as the distinction between visible and invisible is taken away by the painter, all the characteristic features are immediately lost, by means of which this higher kind is elevated above the lesser.

For instance: when at last the gods, who are divided as to the fate of the Trojans, come to blows: with the poet<sup>1</sup> all this battle is represented as invisible, and this invisibility permits the imagination to widen the scene, and leaves it free scope<sup>2</sup> to represent to itself the persons of the gods and their actions as gigantic, and as far above ordinary humanity as it pleases. But painting must adopt a visible scene, the various dimensions of which, necessarily known to us, must furnish the standard

for the persons who are to act in it, a standard which the eye has close to it, and the disproportion of which to these higher beings causes these higher beings which the poet had represented as huge to become on the canvas of the artist enormous.

Minerva, upon whom Mars in this battle makes the first onset, steps back, and snatches in her mighty hands from the earth a dark, rough, huge stone, which in ancient days the united force of men's hands had rolled there for a boundary.

Ἡ δ' ἀναχασσαμένη λίθον εἴλετο χειρὶ παχείῃ  
 Κείμενον ἐν πεδίῳ, μέλανα, τρηχύν τε, μέγαν τε  
 Τὸν ῥ' ἄνδρες πρότεροι θέσαν ἔμμεναι οὐρον ἀρούρης \*

In order properly to estimate the greatness of this stone, we must remember that Homer makes his heroes for the nonce as strong as the strongest man in his day; but he makes those men whom Nestor knew in his youth surpass them in strength. Now, I ask, with respect to this stone, which not one man out of the men of Nestor's youthful contemporaries could have put down for a boundary stone,—now, I ask, if Minerva had thrown such a stone at Mars, of what stature must the goddess be? If her stature is to be proportioned to the greatness of the stone, then the wonder ceases. A man who is three times larger than I am must naturally be able to throw a stone three times greater. But if the stature of the goddess be not proportioned to the greatness of the stone, then there arises an evident improbability in the painting, the repulsiveness of which is not removed by the cold reflection that a goddess must have super-human strength. Where I see an effect greater than usual, I expect to find an instrument greater than usual. And Mars overthrown by this mighty stone,

Ἐπτα δ' ἔπεσχε πέλεθρα

'covered seven acres'. It is impossible that the

painter could give this extraordinary size to the god, but if he does not give it him, then Mars does not lie upon the ground like the Homeric Mars, but like a common warrior<sup>4</sup>. Longinus says, it often occurs to him that Homer had intended to elevate his men to the rank of gods, and to degrade his gods to the rank of men. Painting carries this degradation into execution. In it everything vanishes which in the hands of the poet made the gods superior to the god-like men. Greatness, strength, speed, qualities which Homer keeps in reserve for his gods in a higher and more wonderful degree than those which he attributes to his best heroes, must, in the painting<sup>5</sup>, sink down to the level of the common measure of humanity, and Jupiter and Agamemnon, Apollo and Achilles, Ajax and Mars, become entirely beings of the same kind, who can only be distinguished by certain outward conventional signs. The means which Painting uses in order to make us understand that, in her composition, this or that object must be considered as invisible, is a thin cloud, in which the object is concealed on the side which is turned towards the actors. This cloud appears to have been borrowed from Homer himself. For when in the tumult of the fight one of the more important heroes gets into danger, from which only divine aid can save him, the poet makes a protecting deity cover him with a thick cloud, or with night, and so rescues him, as Paris is saved by Venus<sup>6</sup>, Idæus by Neptune<sup>7</sup>, Hector by Apollo.<sup>8</sup> And this mist, this cloud, Caylus does not forget to recommend strongly to the artist, when he sketches out for him the picture of such events. But who does not see that the poet can only use this veiling in mist and night as a poetical mode of describing invisibility? It has always amazed me to find this poetical expression reduced to reality, and a real cloud put into the picture, behind which the hero, as behind a screen, stands concealed from his foe. This was not the intention



of the poet. This is to go beyond the limits of painting ; for this cloud is here a real hieroglyphic, a mere symbolical sign which does not render the rescued hero invisible, but appeals to the spectator to consider him as invisible. It is no better than the scrap of writing which comes out of the mouth of persons in the old Gothic paintings.

It is true that Homer makes Achilles, when Apollo delivers Hector from him three times, thrust his lance into the thick cloud : *τρίς δ' ἥρα τῷψε βαθείαν*<sup>9</sup>. But that in poetical language means no more than that Achilles was so furious that he three times thrust forward his lance without perceiving that his foe was no longer before him. Achilles saw no real cloud, and the whole artifice, by which the gods are made invisible, does not consist in the cloud, but in the speedy withdrawal of the person. Only in order to point out that the withdrawal is so rapidly effected that no mortal eye can follow the figure which is withdrawn, the poet previously wraps him in a mist ; not in order that a cloud may be seen instead of the withdrawn body, but that we may consider that which is veiled in a mist as invisible. With this view he sometimes reverses the state of things, and instead of making the object invisible, smites the subject with blindness. Thus Neptune darkens the eyes of Achilles when he rescues Aeneas from his murdering hands, whom he with a single effort removes from the middle of the crowd at once into the rear<sup>10</sup>. In fact, however, the eyes of Achilles are as little darkened in this instance as in the other instance, when the rescued hero is veiled in mist ; but the poet uses the one and the other only for the purpose of making apparent the extreme swiftness of the withdrawal which we call vanishing. But the painters have not only appropriated the Homeric cloud in those cases in which Homer had, or would have used it, that is, on occasions of invisibility or vanishing ; but on every occasion when the spectator ought to perceive in the picture

what the persons in the picture, either all or part of them, cannot perceive. Minerva was visible to Achilles alone when she restrained him from proceeding to violence against Agamemnon. In order to express this, Caylus says: 'I know no other way than that he should be concealed in a cloud from the rest of the assembled council'. This is altogether against the spirit of the poet. To be invisible is the natural condition of the gods. They require no blinding and no cutting off of the rays of light in order to be invisible, but they require<sup>11</sup> an illumination and an elevation of the mortal countenance when they wish to be seen. Nor is it sufficient that the cloud is to the painter an arbitrary and not a natural sign: this arbitrary sign has never the distinct significance which as such it should have, because it is employed as well for the purpose of making what is visible invisible, as of making what is invisible visible<sup>12</sup>.

## CHAPTER XIII

IF Homer's works were entirely lost, if we had nothing remaining of his *Iliad* and *Odyssey* but a series of pictures like those which Caylus put forth, should we from these pictures—let them be drawn by the hand of the most perfect master—be able to form the idea which we now have, I will not say of the poet altogether, but merely of his talent for painting? Let us make a trial of the first and best piece. Let it be the picture of the pestilence<sup>1</sup>. What do we see on the canvass of the painter?—Dead corpses, burning funeral piles, dying men busied with the dead, an angry god shooting his arrows from a cloud upon the people. The greatest wealth of this picture is the poverty of the poet. For if we were to restore Homer from this picture, what could we say?—‘Hereupon Apollo was angry, and shot his arrows into the hosts of Greeks, many Greeks died, and their corpses were burnt’. Now read Homer himself :

Βῆ δὲ κατ' Οὐλύμποιο καρήνων, χωόμενος κῆρ,  
 Τόξ' ὤμοισιν ἔχων, ἀμφηρεφέα τε φαρέτρην·  
 "Ἐκλαγξαν δ' ἄρ' οἷστοι ἐπ' ὤμων χωόμενοιο,  
 Αὐτοῦ κινήθέντος· ὁ δ' ἦτε νυκτὶ ἰοικώς·  
 "Ἔζετ' ἔπειτ' ἀπάνευθε νεῶν, μετὰ δ' ἰδὼν ἔηκεν·  
 Δεινὴ δὲ κλαγγὴ γένητ' ἀργυρέοιο βιοῖο.  
 Οὐρῆας μὲν πρῶτον ἐπφύχετο, καὶ κύνας ἀργούς·  
 Αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' αὐτοῖσι βέλος ἔχεπευκὲς ἐφίεις  
 Βάλλ'· αἰεὶ δὲ πυρὰ νεκρῶν καλοντο θαμναί·<sup>2</sup> *Il. A. 44-52.*

As far as life transcends a picture, so far does the poet here transcend the painter. In grim rage, armed with bow and quiver, Apollo steps down from the ramparts of Olympus. I not only see him

descend, I hear him. At every step the arrows rattle on the shoulders of the wrathful god; he marches onward like the night. Now he seats himself opposite the ships, and lets fly—fearful is the sound of the silver bow—the first arrow upon the beasts of burden and the dogs. Then, with a more poisoned arrow, he pierces the men themselves; and, everywhere, incessantly, blazes up the funeral pile with corpses. It is impossible to translate into another tongue the musical painting which the words of the poet convey to us. It is as impossible to form an idea of it from the material painting, though that is among the least of the advantages which the poetical picture has over the other. The principal advantage is this, that the poet leads us through a whole gallery of pictures to the one which the material painting has borrowed from him. But perhaps the pestilence is not a favourable subject for painting. Here is another which has more charms for the eye. The Banqueting Gods at Council<sup>3</sup>; the open golden palace. Groups of the most beautiful and dignified figures placed according to the will of the painter. Hebe, eternal youth, ministering with a goblet in her hand. What architecture! What masses of light and shade! What contrasts! What manifold variety of expression! Where shall I begin? Where shall I cease to feed my eye? If the painter so bewitches me, how much more will the poet do so! I open his volume, and I find myself—deceived. I find four good plain lines, which might be used as an inscription on the picture, in which lies the material for a picture, but which are no picture themselves:

Οἱ δὲ θεοὶ παρ' Ζηνὶ καθήμενοι ἡγορόωντο  
 Χρυσέῃ ἐν δαπέδῳ μετὰ δέ σφισι πότνια Ἥβη  
 Νέκταρ ἐνοχόει· τοὶ δὲ χρυσεόισι δεπάεσσιν  
 Δειδέχοντο Ἀλλήλους, Τρώων πόλιν εἰσορόωντες<sup>4</sup>

An Apollonius, or even a yet inferior poet, could not have written more poorly; and here Homer

remains as far below the painter as the painter, in the other subject, remained below him. It is to be observed that Caylus, in the whole fourth book of the *Iliad*, finds no other picture than the one represented in these four lines.

Whatever effect, he says, this fourth book may produce through the manifold incitements to combat, through the abundance of brilliant and marked characters, and through the skill with which the poet shows us the multitudes whom he sets in motion ; nevertheless this book is wholly useless to the painter.

He might have added to this : however rich it may be in what is called poetical painting ; for in truth there are to be found in this fourth book as many and as perfect poetical paintings as in any other book. Where is there a more finished picture, one more fraught with illusion, than that of Pandarus, when, at the instigation of Minerva, he breaks the truce, and lets fly his arrow at Menelaus ?—than that of the advance of the Greek host ?—than that of the simultaneous attack of both armies ?—than that of the act of Ulysses, by which he avenges the death of his Leucus ?

But what is the inference from this ? That not a few of the most beautiful pictures of Homer afford no pictures for the artist,—that the artist can extract pictures from him where he himself had none ! That those which he had, and which the artist could use, would be only very poor pictures indeed, if they exhibited no more than the artist exhibits ! What is the final conclusion ? That my question, put at the beginning of this paragraph, **must** be answered in the negative ; that from the **material** picture for which the poems of Homer furnish the subject, be they ever so many, and ever so excellent, no conclusion can be drawn **as to the** pictorial talent of the poet.

## CHAPTER XIV

BUT is it so? and can a poem be very useful to the painter, and yet be in itself not picturesque; while, on the other hand, can another be very picturesque, and yet be of no avail to the painter? Then there is an end to the idea of Count Caylus, which makes the usefulness of the poet to the painter the touchstone of poets, and fixes their rank according to the number of pictures which they afford to the artist<sup>1</sup>.

Far be it from us to permit, even by our silence, this to acquire the semblance of a rule. Milton would be the first innocent sacrifice. For it really appears probable that the scornful sentence of condemnation which Caylus passes upon him is not so much the result of national taste as the consequence of this supposed rule. The loss of his sight, he says, is the principal feature of resemblance which Milton had to Homer. Indeed, Milton can fill no picture galleries. But if it were a necessary condition of my preserving bodily eyesight that the sphere of it should also be the sphere of my mind's eye, then I should consider the loss of the former, if it set me free from such a limitation, as a great gain<sup>2</sup>.

*Paradise Lost*, therefore, is not the less the first epic poem after that of Homer because it offers few pictures; even as the history of our Lord's Passion is not a poem because one can scarcely touch, even with the point of a needle, a passage in it which has not furnished material to a multitude of the greatest artists. The Evangelists narrate the facts with all possible dryness and simplicity, and the artist avails himself of the different portions of their narrative, though they on their part have not manifested the

slightest spark of pictorial genius. There are picturesque and unpicturesque *facta*, and the historian can narrate in a very unpicturesque manner those that are most picturesque, even as the poet is able to represent in a picturesque manner those that are most unpicturesque<sup>3</sup>. To understand it otherwise is to allow yourself to be deceived by an equivocal expression. A poetical picture is not necessarily that which can be changed into a material picture; but every trait, every combination of several traits through which the poet renders his object so sensible to us, that we become better acquainted with this object than with his words, is called *picturesque*, is called a *picture*, because it brings us nearer to the degree of illusion which the material picture is especially capable of exciting, and which in the first instance, and most easily results from the subject of the material picture<sup>4</sup>.

## CHAPTER XV

Now it is also in the power of the poet, as experience shows us, to elevate to this degree of illusion the representation of objects other than those that are visible. Consequently the artist must necessarily forgo whole classes of pictures which the poet has before him. Dryden's *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day* is full of musical pictures which the pencil cannot touch, but I will not waste my time in such examples as these, from which, after all, one does not learn much more than that colours are not tones, and that ears are not eyes. I will confine myself to the consideration of pictures of purely visible objects, which are common to the poet and painter. How comes it to pass that many poetical pictures of this kind are of no use to the painter, and, on the other hand, how many pictures, properly so-called, lose the greatest part of their effect under the treatment of the poet?

Examples must guide me. I repeat it : the picture of Pandarus in the fourth book of the *Iliad* is one of the most finished and the most fraught with illusions of any in Homer. From the grasp of the bow to the flight of the arrow every moment is painted, and all these moments are so close to each other, and yet so distinct, that if one did not know how to manage a bow, one might learn it from this picture alone.

Pandarus bends his bow before him, fastens the string to it, opens his quiver, chooses a new and well-feathered arrow, puts the arrow on the string, draws back the string with the arrow ; the string is close to his breast, the iron barb of the arrow rests on the bow, the great rounded bow resounds



as it stretches, the string whirrs, the arrow springs forth, and eagerly flies to its mark. Caylus cannot have overlooked this admirable picture. What was it he found therein which led him to think it incapable of occupying the artist? and what was it which made him think that the assembly of the banqueting gods in council was more useful for this purpose? Here, as well as there, are visible objects, and what does the painter want more than visible objects to cover his canvas?

The knot of the difficulty must be this. Although both objects, so far as they are visible, are equally susceptible of being painted, in the proper sense of the word, there is nevertheless this essential difference between them: that the former is a visible action in progress, the different parts of which, by degrees, and in succession of time, develop themselves; the latter, on the other hand, is a visible, stationary action, the different parts of which unfold themselves, one next to the other, in space. But if painting, on account of the signs and means of imitation which it employs, and which can only be combined in space, must entirely renounce time, then progressive actions cannot, in so far as they are progressive, be included in the number of its subjects, but it must content itself with co-existent actions, or with mere bodies, which, on account of their position, cause an action to be suspected. Poetry, on the other hand,——

## CHAPTER XVI

BUT I will try to consider the matter upon first principles. I reason in this way. If it be true that Painting, in its imitations, makes use of entirely different means and signs from those which Poetry employs ; the former employing figures and colours in space, the latter articulate sounds in time,—if, incontestably, signs must have a proper relation to the thing signified, then co-existent signs can only express objects which are co-existent, or the parts of which co-exist, but signs which are successive can only express objects which are in succession, or the parts of which succeed one another in time. Objects which co-exist, or the parts of which co-exist, are termed bodies. It follows that bodies, with their visible properties, are the proper objects of painting. Objects which succeed, or the parts of which succeed to each other, are called generally actions. It follows that actions are the proper object of Poetry.

But all bodies do not exist only in space, but also in time. They have continued duration, and in every moment of their duration may assume a different appearance and stand in a different relation. Each of these momentary appearances and relations is the effect of a preceding, and the cause of a subsequent action, and so presents to us, as it were, a centre of action. It follows that Painting can imitate actions, but only by way of indication, and through the means of bodies.

On the other hand, actions cannot subsist by themselves, but must be dependent on certain beings. In so far, now, as these beings are bodies, or may be regarded as such, poetry also paints

bodies, but only by way of indication, and through the means of actions.

Painting, with regard to compositions in which the objects are co-existent, can only avail itself of one moment of action, and must therefore choose that which is the most pregnant, and by which what has gone before and what is to follow will be most intelligible.

And even thus Poetry, in her progressive imitations, can only make use of one single property of bodies, and must therefore choose that one which conveys to us the most sensible idea of the form of the body, from that point of view for which it employs it.

From this is derived the rule of the unity of picturesque epithets, and of frugality in the description of bodily objects.

I should put little confidence in this dry chain of argument did I not find it fully confirmed by the practice of Homer, or rather, I should say, if the practice of Homer had not introduced me to it. Upon these principles only the great manner of the Greek can be defined and explained, and the sentence which it deserves be passed on the directly opposite manner of so many modern poets who wish to rival the painter in a performance in which they must necessarily be surpassed by him. I find that Homer paints nothing but progressive actions, and paints all bodies and individual things only on account of their relation to these actions, and generally with a single trait. What wonder is it, then, that the painter, where Homer has painted, finds little or nothing for himself to do, and that his harvest is only to be gathered where history brings together a multitude of beautiful bodies, in beautiful attitudes, within a space favourable to art, while the poet himself may paint as little as he pleases these bodies, these attitudes, and this space? Let any one go through the whole series of paintings, piece by piece, which Caylus has taken from

him, and he will find a confirmation of this remark.

Here I leave the Count, who would make the colour-grinding stone of the painter the touchstone of the poet, in order that I may throw a greater light upon the manner of Homer.

I say<sup>1</sup> that Homer usually makes use of one trait. A ship is to him at one time a dark ship, at another a hollow ship, at another a swift ship, at the most a well-rowed black ship. He goes no farther in the painting of a ship but the navigation, the departure, the arrival of the ship; out of these he makes a detailed picture, a picture out of which the painter must make five or six separate pictures if he wishes to place it entirely upon his canvas.

If particular circumstances compel Homer to fix our attention for a longer time upon one individual corporeal object, he nevertheless produces no picture which the painter can imitate with his pencil; but he knows how to use numberless expedients of art, so as to place this single object in a successive series of moments, in each of which it appears in a different form, and for the last of which the painter is obliged to wait, in order that he may show us completely formed that object, the gradual formation of which we have seen in the poet. For example, when Homer wishes to show us the chariot of Juno, he makes Hebe put together every piece of it before our eyes. We see the spokes and the axletrees, and the driving-seat, the pole, the traces, and the straps, not brought together as a whole, but as they are separately put together by the hands of Hebe. Upon the wheels alone the poet lavishes more than one trait, and he shows us the eight brazen spokes, the golden fellies, the tires of bronze, the silver naves—each individual separate thing. One might almost say, that because there were more wheels than one, therefore he was obliged to spend much more time on their descrip-

tion than the putting on of each particular part would in reality have required.

Ἦβη δ' ἀμφ' ὀχέεσσι θοῶς βάλε καμπύλα κύκλα,  
 Χάλκεα, ὀκτάκνημα, σιδηρέφ' ἄξονι ἀμφίς.  
 Τῶν ἦτοι χρυσέη ἵνυς ἀφθιτος, αὐτὰρ ὕπερθεν  
 Χάλκε' ἐπίσσωτρα, προσαρηρότα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι.  
 Πλήμναι δ' ἀργύρου εἰσὶ περίδρομοι ἀμφοτέρωθεν.  
 Δίφρος δὲ χρυσεόισι καὶ ἀργυρέοισιν ἱμῶσιν  
 Ἑντέταται· δοῖαι δὲ περίδρομοι ἀντυγές εἰσιν.  
 Τοῦ δ' ἐξ ἀργύρεος ῥυμὸς πέλεν· αὐτὰρ ἐπ' ἄκραν  
 Δῆσε χρύσειον καλὸν ζυγόν, ἐν δὲ λέπαδνα  
 Κάλ' ἔβαλε χούσει·<sup>2</sup> . . .

Does Homer wish to show us how Agamemnon was clad? Then the king must put on his whole clothing piece by piece before our eyes—the soft undergarment, the great mantle, the beautiful sandals, the sword—and then he is ready, and grasps the sceptre. We see the raiment in which the poet paints the act of his being clothed; another would have painted the clothes in detail down to the smallest fringe, and we shall have seen nothing of the action of putting on the raiment.

Μαλακὸν δ' ἔνδυσε χιτῶνα,  
 Καλὸν, νηγάτεον· περὶ δὲ μέγα βάλλετο φᾶρος·  
 Ποσσὶ δ' ὑπὸ λιπαροῖσιν ἐδήσατο καλὰ πέδιλα.  
 Ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' ὁμοῖσιν βάλετο ξίφος ἀργυρόηλον,  
 Εἴλετο δὲ σκῆπτρον πατρώϊον, ἀφθιτον αἰεὶ.<sup>3</sup>

And as to that sceptre which here is only described as ancestral and immortal, as in another place one like it is described only as χρυσεόις ἡλοῖσι πεπαρμένον, garnished with golden bosses, when I say we are to have a more complete and more accurate picture of this mighty sceptre, what is it that Homer does? Does he paint for us, besides the golden bosses, the wood of which it is made, and the carved head? Yes, it would have been so in a description of heraldic art, in order that in future time it might

be possible to make one exactly like it. And I am certain that many a modern poet would have given such an heraldic description, with the simple and honest notion that he himself was really painting because a painter could imitate him. But did Homer trouble himself with considering how far he should leave the painter behind him? Instead of a description he gives us the history of the sceptre: first we see it as worked by Vulcan; next it glitters in the hand of Jupiter; then it proclaims the dignity of Mercury; then it becomes the commander-staff of the warrior Pelops; and then it is the pastoral-staff of the peaceful Atreus.

Σκῆπτρον ἔχων, τὸ μὲν "Ἡφαιστος κάμε τεύχων,  
 "Ἡφαιστος μὲν δῶκε Διὶ Κρονίῳ ἀνακτι·  
 Αὐτὰρ ἄρα Ζεὺς δῶκε διακτόρῳ Ἀργεϊφόντῳ·  
 Ἑρμείας δὲ ἀναξ δῶκεν Πέλοπι πληξίππῳ·  
 Αὐτὰρ ὁ αὖτε Πέλοψ δῶκ' Ἀτρέϊ, ποιμένι λαῶν·  
 Ἀτρεὺς δὲ θνήσκων ἔλιπεν πολύαρνι Θυέστῳ·  
 Αὐτὰρ ὁ αὖτε Θυέστ' Ἀγαμέμνονι λείπε φορῆνα·  
 Πολλῆσιν νήσοισι καὶ Ἀργεῖ παντὶ ἀνᾶσσειν<sup>4</sup>

And thus, at last, I am better acquainted with this sceptre than if a painter had placed it before my eyes, or a second Vulcan delivered it into my hand. I should not be surprised to find that one of the ancient expositors of Homer had admired this passage, as containing the most perfect allegory of the origin, the progress, the establishment, and finally of the hereditary character of kingly authority among men. I should smile, indeed, if I were to read that Vulcan, who wrought the sceptre, represented fire, that thing which is most indispensable to the support of man, that relief of our necessities which had induced the first mortals to subject themselves to the rule of a single person; that the first king was a son of Time (Ζεὺς Κρονίων), a venerable old man, who wished to share his power with an eloquent clever man, with a Mercury (διακτόρῳ Ἀργεϊφόντῳ), or entirely to give it up to

him; that the wise orator, at a time when the young state was threatened by foreign foes, had delivered up his supreme authority to the bravest warrior (πέλοπι πλεξίππῳ); that the brave warrior, after he had subdued the enemy and secured the state, had found means to transfer it to his son, who, as a peace-loving ruler, as a beneficent pastor of his people, had made them acquainted with good living and abundance (ποιμὴν λαῶν), whereby he had paved the way after his death for the wealthiest of his relations (πολύγαρμι Θυέστη): so that what hitherto confidence had bestowed and merit had considered rather as a burthen than a dignity, should now be obtained by presents and bribes, and secured for ever to the family, like any other acquired property. I should smile, but I should notwithstanding be confirmed in my esteem for the poet to whom so much could be attributed.

But this lies out of my path, and I consider the history of the sceptre merely as an artifice to induce us to contemplate for a while an individual thing without introducing us to a frigid description of its separate parts. Also, when Achilles swears by his sceptre to avenge the contumely with which Agamemnon has treated him, Homer gives us the history of this sceptre. We see it green and flourishing on the mountain, the steel severs it from the trunk, strips off its leaves and bark, and makes it a fitting instrument to signify, in the hands of the judges of the people, their divine dignity.

Ναὶ μὰ τὸδε σκῆπτρον, τὸ μὲν οὐποτε φύλλα καὶ ὄρους  
 φύσει, ἐπειδὴ πρῶτα τομὴν ἐν ὕρεσσι λέλοιπεν,  
 Οὐδ' ἀναθελήσει· περὶ γάρ ῥά ἐ χαλκὸς ἔλειπεν  
 φύλλα τε καὶ φλοιδόν· νῦν αὐτὲ μιν υἷες Ἀχαιῶν  
 Ἐν παλάμῃς φερέουσι δικασπόλοι, οἷτε θέμιστας  
 Πρὸς Διὸς εἰρύεται.<sup>5</sup>

It was not so much the object of Homer to paint two sceptres of different materials and forms, as to make a clear and plain representation to us of the

difference of power of which these sceptres were the emblems. The former, a work by Vulcan ; the latter cut on the mountain by an unknown hand : the former, the ancient possession of a noble house ; the latter destined for the strongest hand : the former in the hand of a monarch stretched over many islands and over the whole of Argos ; the latter borne by one chosen out of the midst of the Greeks, to whom, with others, the administration of the laws was confided. This was really the distance at which Agamemnon and Achilles stood from each other ; a distance which Achilles himself, in spite of all his blind wrath, could not do otherwise than confess.

But not only on those occasions when Homer combines with his descriptions of this kind ulterior objects, but also when he only desires to show us the picture, he will disperse, as it were, the picture in a kind of history of the object, in order that the different parts of it, which in nature we see combined together, may in his picture as naturally seem to follow upon each other, and to keep true step with the flow of his narrative. For example, he wishes to paint for us the bow of Pandarus : a bow of horn, of such-and-such a length, well polished, and tipped at both ends with beaten gold. What does he do ? Does he give us a dry enumeration of all its properties, one after the other ? No such thing : that would be to give an account of a bow, to enumerate its qualities ; but not to paint one. He begins with the chase of the wild goat, out of whose horns the bow is made. Pandarus had lain in wait for him in the rocks, and had slain him : the horns were of extraordinary size, and on that account he destined them for a bow. They are brought to the workshop ; the artist unites, polishes, decorates them. And so, as I have said, we see the gradual formation by the poet of that which we can only see in a completed form in the work of the painter.



Τόξον ἐξέσπον, ἰξάλου αἶγος  
 Ἀγρίου, ὃν ῥά ποτ' αὐτὸς, ὑπὸ στρένοιο τυχήσας,  
 Πέτρης ἐκβαίνοντα δεδεγμένος ἐν προδοκῇσιν,  
 Βεβλήκει πρὸς στήθος· ὃ δ' ὕπτιος ἔμπεσε πέτρῃ·  
 Τοῦ κέρα ἐκ κεφαλῆς ἐκκαιδεκάδωρα πεφύκει·  
 Καὶ τὰ μὲν ἀσκήσας κεραοξόος ἤραρε τέκτων,  
 Πᾶν δ' εὖ λειήνας, χρυσέην ἐπέθηκε κορώνην <sup>6</sup>

I should never have done if I were to transcribe  
 all the instances of this kind. They will occur in  
 multitudes to him who really knows his Homer.

## CHAPTER XVII

BUT, it will be objected, the signs of Poetry are not only successive, but they are also arbitrary ; and as arbitrary signs they are certainly capable of expressing bodies as they appear in space.

We find instances of this in Homer himself. We have only to remember the shield of Achilles, and we are supplied with the most conclusive example how discursively and yet how poetically it is possible to paint a single thing in all its co-existing parts.

I will answer this two-fold objection. I call it two-fold because a right conclusion must avail even without an example ; and, on the other hand, the example of Homer has weight with me, even when I do not know how to justify it by any argument.

It is true that, as the signs of speech are arbitrary, so it is very possible that by means of them one may cause the parts of a body to follow in succession as easily as in nature they exist side by side. But this is a property of speech and of signs in general, but not in the relation which is most favourable to Poetry. The poet wishes not only to be intelligible,—his representations ought not only to be clear and perspicuous ; with this the prose writer may be content. But the poet desires to make the ideas which he awakens in us so vivid, that from the rapidity with which they arise we believe ourselves to be really as conscious of his objects as if they were actually presented to our senses ; and in this moment of illusion we cease to be conscious of the means—that is, of the words—which he employs for this purpose. This brings us back to the explanation already given of poetical pictures.

But the poet should always paint ; and now we wish to see to what extent bodies considered in their co-existing parts can be the subject of this kind of painting.

How shall we attain to the clear representation of a thing in space ? First let us consider the separate parts of it, then the combination of these parts, and lastly the whole. Our senses achieve these different operations with so astounding a speed, that they appear to us to be but one, and this speed is necessarily indispensable when we have to attain a conception of the whole, which is no more than the result of the conception of the parts, and of their combination. Let it be granted that the poet leads us in the most perfect order from one part of the object to another<sup>1</sup> ; let it be granted that he knows how to make the combination of the whole clear to us,—how long a time does he require for this purpose ? That which the eye at once surveys he enumerates to us with marked slowness by degrees, and it often happens that we have forgotten the first when we have arrived at the last. Nevertheless, it is out of these traits that we must compose a whole. To the eye the parts considered remain constantly present, we can run over them again and again : to the ear, on the contrary, the parts, which have been apprehended, are lost if they have not remained in the memory ; and if they do so remain, what trouble, what striving does it cost us to renew the impressions all in the same order, and as vividly as at first, even once to recall them with moderate swiftness, and to attain to even an approximate conception of the whole !

Let any one make the experiment in an example which may be called a masterpiece of its kind :

There does the noble Gentian raise his head  
High o'er the lower troop of common plants,  
Beneath its standard serve a tribe of flowers ;  
Its own blue brother bows and honours it.

While golden pyramids of brilliant flowers  
 Cling round the stem and crown its robe of green,  
 The leaves of brilliant white, with deepest green,  
 Streaked and inlaid throughout, are seen to glow  
 With the moist diamond's many-coloured rays.  
 Most righteous law ! uniting strength with grace,  
 In the fair body dwells the fairer soul.  
 Here creeps a lowly plant like some grey mist,  
 Its leaves by nature shaped as cruciform ;  
 Two gilded beaks formed by the lovely flower  
 Spring from a bird made out of amethyst.  
 Here a bright finger-fashioned leaf doth cast  
 Its green reflection in the limpid stream.  
 The flower of snow, with purple lightly tinged,  
 Environed by the white rays of a star ;  
 Emeralds and roses deck the trodden heath,  
 And cliffs are covered with a purple robe <sup>2</sup>

Here are plants and flowers which the learned poet paints with great skill after nature. Paints, but paints without producing any illusion<sup>3</sup>. I will not say that he who has never seen these plants and flowers cannot represent them at all to himself from this picture. It may be that all poetical pictures require a previous acquaintance with their objects ; nor will I deny that in him who possesses such an acquaintance the poet may not awaken a more vivid idea of some of the parts of the object. I only ask how he is affected with the conception of the whole. In order that this conception should be vivid no single part of it should be prominent, but a higher light must be equally distributed over all ; our imagination must rapidly glance over all alike, in order to place at once combined before us that which in nature would be seen at once. Is that the case here ? and if it be not, how can it be said 'that the most accurate drawing of the painter must be entirely feeble and dim, when compared with this poetical picture ?'<sup>4</sup>. It remains, however, infinitely inferior to that which lines and colours could express on canvas, and the critic who has bestowed this exaggerated praise must have considered the poetry from an entirely false point of view ; he must have paid greater regard to the extraneous ornaments which the poet has therein

interwoven in order to exalt the vegetable life, and to develope its inward perfections, to which outward beauty serves only as the rind,—to this he must have paid greater regard than to the beauty itself, and to the degree of vividness and resemblance of the picture which the painter or the poet could present to us as created from it. Here we are only concerned with the latter, and he who can say that these lines alone

While golden pyramids of brilliant flowers  
Clung round the stem and crown its robe of green,  
The leaves of brilliant white, with deepest green,  
Streaked and inlaid throughout, are seen to glow  
With the moist diamond's many-coloured rays

in respect to the impression which they make, can rival a picture by Van Huysen, must either not have consulted his sensations, or have chosen deliberately to contradict them. It may be that a man who held a flower in his hand might recite these verses with great effect ; but, taken by themselves, they are little or nothing. In these words I hear the poet labouring at his work, but I am very far from seeing the thing itself.

Once again let me say I do not deny to language generally the power of painting a corporeal whole in its parts. It can do so because its signs, although they are successive, are nevertheless arbitrary. But I do deny that language can use them as a means of poetry, because the power of creating illusion is wanting to these word-paintings of bodies, upon which power poetry principally depends. And this power of creating illusion, I say, must necessarily be wanting, because the co-existence of bodies thereby comes into collision with the consecutiveness of language. And because the former is dissolved in the latter, which, it is true, facilitates the dismemberment of the whole into its parts, but makes the final putting together again, or recomposition of the parts into a whole, an extremely difficult and often an impossible task.

In every case, indeed, where there is no question about creating illusion, where the author has only to address the understanding of the reader, and has for his object only to convey clear, and, as far as possible, complete ideas, these may well find their place in descriptive paintings of bodies, from which poetry is debarred ; and not only the prose writer, but the dogmatic<sup>6</sup> poet (for in so far as he dogmatizes he is no poet) can use them with great advantage. Thus, for example, Virgil, in his poem of the Georgics, describes a cow which is a good breeder :

Optima torvae<sup>6</sup>

Forma<sup>7</sup> bovis, cui turpe caput, cui plurima cervix,  
Et crurum tenuis a mento palearia pendent ;  
Tum longo nullus lateri modus ; omnia magna ;  
Pes etiam, et camuris hirtae sub cornibus aures.  
Nec mihi displiceat maculis insignis et albo,  
Aut juga detrectans, interdumque aspera cornu,  
Et faciem tauro propior, quaeque ardua tota,  
Et gradiens ima verrit vestigia cauda.

Or a beautiful foal :

Illi ardua cervix<sup>7</sup>

Argutumque caput, brevis alvus obesaque terga,  
Luxuriatque toris animosum pectus<sup>8</sup>

Who is there who does not see that the poet has been more intent on a division and distinction of the parts, than on showing us the whole? He desires to show us the signs of a beautiful foal, or of a cow that is a good breeder, in order that we may be in a condition, in the event of our meeting with few or more of these animals, to form a judgment as to the goodness of the one or the other. Whether he has enabled us easily to comprehend all these signs in a vivid picture or not is a matter of little importance to him<sup>9</sup>.

Except for this purpose, pictures in detail of corporeal objects, lacking the above-mentioned Homeric artifice of changing what is co-existent into what is really successive, have in all ages been considered by the best judges as pieces of frigid conceit, for which little or rather no genius is

required. When the scribbler of poetry, says Horace, can advance no further, he begins to paint a grove, an altar, a brook flowing through lovely flowers, a rustling stream, a rainbow

lucus, et ara Dianæ ;

Et properantis aquæ per amœnos ambitus agros,  
Aut flumen Rhenum, aut pluvius describitur arcus <sup>10</sup>

Pope, when he came to man's estate, looked back with contempt upon the attempts at the picturesque of his poetical childhood. He expressly laid it down that whoever wished to bear worthily the name of a poet, ought to renounce as early as possible the mania for pictorial description, and declared that a poem purely descriptive was a feast made of sauces alone<sup>11</sup>. As to Herr Von Kleist, I can say for certain that he prided himself very little upon his *Spring*. If he had lived longer he would have given it a very different form. He contemplated the introduction of a plan for it, and meditated upon the means of placing in a natural and successive order before his eyes the multitude of images, which he appeared to have snatched at hazard from the infinite space of renewed creation. He would at the same time have followed the advice which Marmontel, referring to his *Eclogues*, had profitably bestowed upon several German poets,—he would have converted a series of pictures but scantily interspersed with sentiments, into a series of sentiments but scantily interwoven with pictures<sup>12</sup>.

## CHAPTER XVIII

AND yet it is said that Homer himself has been guilty of these cold descriptions of corporeal objects. I think that there are but very few passages which can be cited as sustaining this allegation; and I am certain that even these few passages are such that they confirm the rule from which they appear to be exceptions.

The principle remains: succession of time is the domain of the poet, as space is the domain of the painter. To bring two periods of time, necessarily at a distance from each other, into one and the same picture, as Francesco Mazzuoli<sup>1</sup> does the rape of the Sabine maidens, and the reconciliation of their husbands with their kindred; or as Titian does the whole history of the prodigal son, his libertine life, and his misery and his repentance<sup>2</sup>, is an invasion by the painter of the domain of the poet, which good taste condemns.

To enumerate one by one to the reader divers parts or things which in nature I can survey at a glance when they form a whole,—to do this in order thereby to present an image of the whole, is an invasion by the poet of the domain of the painter, whereby the poet squanders much imagination without any profit.

As two equitable friendly neighbouring states do not indeed permit one to take unbecoming liberties in the interior of the empire of the other, but freely allow a mutual indulgence to prevail on their extreme frontiers, with respect to those little infractions of the strict rights of each other which the necessity of the moment and the force of circumstances produce, and which admit of mutual compensation, so it is with Painting and Poetry.



I will not adduce in proof of this proposition the fact that in great historical paintings the single moment is almost always a little protracted,<sup>3</sup> and that perhaps no single picture very rich in figures can be found in which each figure has exactly that motion and position which in the moment of action it should have; one figure is engaged in the moment which precedes, another in the moment which follows. This is a liberty which the artist must justify by certain refinements in his arrangement, by the turning away or the removing to a distance some of his persons, so as to allow them to take a part, more or less momentary, in the action. I will content myself with citing the remark which Mengs makes on the drapery<sup>4</sup> of Raffaello<sup>5</sup>:

All the folds of his draperies have a meaning and reason, whether derived from their weight or from the action of the limb which it covers. Frequently you may trace in them the previous position of the limb. Raffaello has sought to give them this meaning. You see by the folds whether a leg or an arm, previously to their present action, has been forward or backward, whether the limb has passed from a contraction to an extension, or whether it is in the act of passing, or whether it has been extended and is now contracted.

It is indisputable that in this case the artist brings together into one two different moments. For if upon the foot which is behind, and is moving itself forward, that part of the drapery which lies upon it immediately follows, unless the drapery be made of very stiff material, which on that account would be most unsuitable for painting: so there is not a moment in which the drapery forms in the least degree a fold other than the actual posture of the limb requires; but if another fold were made the drapery would be represented as belonging to the former moment, and the limb to the present moment. Nevertheless, who would criticize the

artist severely who finds his advantage in exhibiting the two moments at one and the same time? Who would not rather praise him for having had the sense and the courage to commit so slight a fault, in order to attain to a greater perfection of expression?<sup>6</sup>

The poet deserves the same indulgence. His progressive imitation allows him, to speak strictly, to present only one side, only one property, of his corporeal objects. But when the happy organisation of his speech enables him to do this with a single word, why should he not from time to time add a second such word? And why not, if it be worth the trouble, a third? or indeed a fourth? I have said that with Homer, for example, a ship is either a black ship, or a hollow ship, or a swift ship, or at most a well-rowed black ship. That is to be understood of his general manner. Here and there one finds a passage where he adds a third picturesque epithet, *Καμπύλα κύκλα χάλκεα ὀκτάκνημα*, 'round, brazen, eight-spoked wheels'. Also a fourth: *ἀσπίδα πάντοσ' ἴσην, καλήν, χαλείην ἐξήλατον*, 'an uniformly smooth, beautiful, brazen, hammered shield'. Who blames him for it? Who would not rather thank him for this little excess when we find what a good effect it can produce in a few suitable passages?

I do not mean, however, to deduce a strict justification of the poet or the painter from the above-mentioned comparison of two friendly neighbours. A mere comparison proves and justifies nothing. But this observation must justify them. In the case of the painter, the two different moments are in such near and immediate contact, that without any violent effort they might be considered as one. In the case of the poet the multiplied traits which describe the different parts and properties in space follow so quick upon one another, so very closely, that we seem to hear them all at once.

And herein I say Homer derives very uncommon aid from the excellence of his language. It not

only allows him all possible freedom in the accumulation and composition of epithets, but it also allows these accumulated epithets to be placed in so happy an order<sup>7</sup> that there is no disagreeable uncertainty as to the objects to which they relate. Modern languages, generally, are entirely devoid of one or more of these advantages. Such, for instance, is the French language, which, by way of illustration, is obliged to make use of a circumlocution to express *Καμπύλα, κύκλα, χάλκεα οκτάκνημα*, as 'the round wheels which are of brass, and have eight spokes', expressing the meaning but destroying the picture. But here the sense is nothing, the picture everything; and the former without the latter makes the most animated poet a dreary prosier, a fate which the good Homer has often undergone under the pen of the learned Madame Dacier. Our German language, on the contrary, can indeed change the Homeric adjectives, for the most part, into equivalent and equally short adjectives, but it cannot imitate the happy collocation and order in which the Greek places them. We say, indeed, 'the round, brazen, eight-spoked'—but 'the wheels' drag slowly behind. Who does not see that the three different predicates only convey a weak confused picture before we know the subject to which they belong? The Greek binds the subject immediately with the first predicate, and allows the others to follow. He says: 'round wheels, brazen, eight-spoked'. Thus we know at once of what the poet is speaking, and are made acquainted, according to the natural order of thought, first with the thing itself, then with its accidents. Our language has not this advantage, or shall I say that it has it, and can seldom make use of it without ambiguity? It is the same thing. For if we place the adjectives after the substantives they must stand in *statu absoluto*; we must say: 'round wheels, brazen and eight-spoked'. But in this *status* our adjectives are used adverbially, and if they are

united as such to the nearest verb which is predicated of the subject, produce not seldom an entirely false, but always a very ambiguous sense.

But I am delayed by trifles, and seem to have forgotten the shield of Achilles, that famous picture, in consequence of which more especially Homer has from all antiquity been considered as a teacher of painting<sup>8</sup>. A shield, it will be said, is surely an individual corporeal object, the detailed description of the successive parts of which cannot be allowed to belong to the province of the poet. And yet Homer has described this shield in more than a hundred admirable verses, as to its material, its form, and all the figures which fill up its enormous surface, so circumstantially and so accurately that modern artists have found no difficulty in making a picture exactly resembling it in all its parts.

I answer to this particular objection what I have already answered. Homer does not paint the shield as perfect and already made, but as a shield being made. He has availed himself of the much-praised artifice of changing that which is co-existent in his design into that which is successive, and thereby presenting us with the living picture of an action instead of the wearisome description of a body. We do not see the shield, but the divine master as he works. There he is with hammer and tongs before his anvil, and after he has wrought the plates out of the roughest ore, the figures which are destined for its ornament rise up before our eyes, one after the other, as he fashions them out of the ore. We do not lose sight of them till all are finished. Now they are finished, and we stand amazed over the work, but it is with the believing amazement of an eye-witness who has seen the work wrought.

This cannot be said of Virgil's shield of Aeneas. The Roman poet was either not susceptible of the delicacy of his model, or the things which he wished

to represent on his shield appeared to him to be such as would not justify their being executed in detail before our eyes. They were prophecies, and it would have been unfitting that the god should have declared them in our presence as clearly as the poet afterwards explains them to us. Prophecies, as prophecies, require a darker speech, in which the real names of the persons of the future to which they relate do not occur. But, according to all appearance, it was the introduction of these real names<sup>9</sup> that the courtier-poet had most at heart. But if this furnishes an excuse for him, it does not take away the evil effect which his deviation from the Homeric path has caused. Every reader of fine taste will admit this. The preparations which Vulcan makes for his work are nearly the same in Virgil as in Homer. But instead of our seeing, as in Homer, the preparation for the work, we see the work itself. Virgil, after he has shown us the god busy in a general way with his Cyclopes

*Ingentem clypeum informant. . . .*  
*. . . . Alii ventosis follibus auras*  
*Accipiunt redduntque; alii stridentia tingunt*  
*Aora lacu; gemit impositis incredibus antrum.*  
*Illi inter sese multa vi brachia tollunt*  
*In numerum, versantque tenaci foreipe massam* <sup>10</sup>

lets the curtain fall, and transports us into a very different scene, whence he brings us by degrees into the valley in which Venus meets Aeneas with the arms which had been prepared in the interval. She leans on the trunk of an oak, and after the hero had sufficiently gazed at them, and wondered, and handled and tried them, then the description begins, or the picture of the shield, which, by means of the everlasting 'here is', and 'there is', 'near to it stands', and 'not far from it is seen', becomes so cold and wearisome, that all the poetical ornaments which even a Virgil could give are needed to prevent our finding it intolerable. For

it is not Aeneas who makes this picture ; he is only delighted with the figures, and knows nothing of their signification

*rerumque ignarus imagine gaudet*

and not even Venus, although she must be presumed to know as much as her good-natured husband about the future fate of her dear grandson, gives us the signification. But it comes from the mouth of the poet ; and the action remains in obvious suspense during the narration. Not one of his personages takes the slightest part in it ; nor has it the slightest effect upon the result, whether this or that thing is represented upon the shield ; the clever courtier is visible throughout, who decks out his subject with every kind of flattering allusion, but the great genius is not visible, which relies upon the intrinsic strength of his work and despises all outward means of rendering it interesting. The shield of Aeneas is therefore a real interpolation, singly and solely intended to flatter the national pride of the Romans : a little foreign rivulet which the poet conducts into his stream in order to make it more lively. The shield of Achilles, on the other hand, is the natural produce of its own fruitful soil ; for a shield was to be made, and as what is necessary does not come without grace from the hand of a god, the shield must have its ornaments. But the skill lies in treating these ornaments only as ornaments, in interweaving them into the main subject so that it furnishes to us the occasion of seeing them, and that could only be done in the manner of Homer. Homer lets Vulcan fashion the ornaments delicately, while, and at the same time, he is making the shield, which is worthy of them. Virgil, on the other hand, appears to have caused his shield to be made for the sake of the ornaments, for he thinks them of sufficient importance to deserve a particular description long after the shield has been made.

## CHAPTER XIX

THE objections which the elder Scaliger<sup>1</sup>, Perrault<sup>2</sup>, Terrasson<sup>3</sup>, and others make to the shield of Homer are well known. As well known are the answers of Dacier<sup>4</sup>, Boivin, and Pope. But it seems to me that these latter have gone much too far, and in the confidence of a good cause have maintained propositions which are incorrect, and contribute little to the justification of the poet.

In order to meet the objection that Homer has filled his shield with a multitude of figures, within the circumference of which they have scarcely room to appear, Boivin undertakes to cause the whole to be drawn, observing the proper proportions. His idea of dividing the space into various concentric circles is very ingenious, although the words of the poet do not give the least excuse for it ; indeed, not the slightest trace is to be found that the ancients had portioned out their shields in this way. Homer himself speaks of *σάκος πάντοσε δεδαιδαλμένον*, of a shield artfully finished on all sides. I should have preferred, for the sake of economising space, to have invoked the concave surface of the shield, for it is known that the ancients did not leave this empty, as the shield of Minerva, wrought by Phidias, testifies<sup>5</sup>. But it was not enough for Boivin to refuse to avail himself of this advantage ; he increased without any necessity the pictures themselves, for which he must find room in the space thus half diminished, while at the same time he divides into two or three pictures that which the poet evidently intended for one only. I well know what induced him to do this, but it ought not to have induced him ; for instead of troubling himself to satisfy the

demands of his adversaries, he ought to have shown them that their demands were unreasonable. I will make my meaning clearer by an example. When Homer, speaking of a city, says <sup>6</sup>

Λαοὶ δ' εἰν ἀγορῇ ἔσαν ἀσσοί· ἐνθα δὲ νεῖκος  
 ὦρῳρει· δύο δ' ἀνδρες ἐνείκεον ἕνεκα ποινηῆς  
 Ἀνδρὸς ἀποφθιμένον· ὃ μὲν εὐχετο, πάντ' ἀποδοῦναι,  
 Δήμῳ πιφαύσκων· ὃ δ' ἀναίνετο μηδὲν ἐλέσθαι·  
 Ἀμφω δ' ἰέσθην ἐπὶ ἱστορίῳ πείραρ ἐλέσθαι.  
 Λαοὶ δ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἐπήπυνον, ἀμφὶς ἄρωγυί·  
 Κήρυκες δ' ἄρα λαὸν ἐρήτυον· οἳ δὲ γέροντες  
 Ἔϊατ' ἐπὶ ξεστοῖσι λίθοις, ἱερῷ ἐνὶ κύκλῳ·  
 Σκῆπτρα δὲ κηρύκων ἐν χέρσιν ἔχον ἡεροφώνων.  
 Τοῖσιν ἔπειτ' ἤϊσσον, ἀμοιβῆδ' ὁ δὲ δίκασον.  
 Κεῖτο δ' ἄρ' ἐν μέσσοισι δύο χρυσοῖο τάλαντα

I believe that he intended to give a single picture only, the picture of a public trial in a court of justice upon the contested payment of a considerable fine due on account of a homicide. The artist who has proposed to himself this subject can only once, and no oftener make use of a single moment: either the moment of the accusation, or of the examination of the witnesses, or of the delivery of the judgment, or of whatever moment he, before or after, or between these moments, considers most suitable. This single moment he must make as pregnant as possible, and deck it out with all the illusions which his art possesses, and which that of the poet does not possess, in the representation of visible objects. But the poet, left so far behind the painter in this respect, the poet, who has to paint this subject with words, and does not choose to fail entirely, what can he do except in his turn avail himself of the peculiar advantages of his art? And what are they? The liberty of extending in his work of art his description over what has preceded as well as over what has succeeded to the single moment of the painter, and the power of describing not only what the painter describes, but also that



which he can only leave us to conjecture. It is by this liberty and this power alone that the poet can place himself on a level with the artist, and they will then most resemble each other where the effect of them is equally vivid ; but not on account of the greater or less number of pictures which the one art addressing the soul through the ear, the other through the eye, may present to it.

These are the principles according to which Boivin ought to have formed his judgment on this passage in Homer ; and he would not then have made as many separate pictures out of it as he thought he remarked separate epochs of time in it. It is true that all that Homer said in these verses could not be combined in one picture : the accusation, the defence, the appearance of witnesses, the acclamations of the people, the striving of the heralds to quiet the tumult, and the utterances of the judges, are all things which follow one upon another, and cannot stand separately by each other as co-existing. Though that which, to use the language of the schools, was not included *in actu* in the picture was *in virtute* therein, and the only true method of imitating by words a material picture, is to combine what is virtually implied with what is actually visible, and not to confine yourself to the limits of Art, within which the poet, it is true, may enumerate *data* for a picture, but will never produce a picture itself.

In the same way Boivin<sup>7</sup> divides the picture of the beleaguered city into three separate pictures. He might as well have cut it up into twelve as into three. For as he never seized the spirit of the poet, and as he required the poet to subject himself to the unities of material painting, he might have discovered many more oversteppings of these unities, till at last it would have been necessary to allot a particular space on the shield for each particular trait of the poet. In my opinion Homer has, generally speaking, not more than ten distinct

pictures on the whole shield, each of which he introduces with a *ἐν μὲν ἔτευξε*, or *ἐν δὲποίησε*, or *ἐν δ' ἐτίθει*, or *ἐν δὲ πόλκιλλε Ἀμφιγυήεις*<sup>n</sup>. Where these introductory words do not occur we have no right to suppose a separate picture; on the other hand, all that these words enclose must be considered as a separate picture, to which nothing is wanting save the arbitrary concentration on a particular epoch of time, which the poet was in no way bound to indicate. Rather if he had indicated it, if he had holden vigorously to it, if he had abstained from introducing the smallest trait which could not have been combined with it in the actual execution of the picture—in a word, if he had done what his censors desired: they, it is true, would have had nothing to reproach him with, but in reality no man of taste would have found anything to admire in him.

Pope not only approves of the division and the designs of Boivin, but thinks that he (Pope) is entitled to particular merit in pointing out that each of these sub-divided pictures is indicated by Homer in accordance with the strictest rules of ordinary modern painting. Contrast, perspective, the three unities, all are observed in the most careful manner; and although he well knew that in the opinion of trustworthy witnesses, painting at the time of the Trojan war was yet in its cradle, therefore either Homer must by virtue of his god-like genius not have paid regard to the paintings of an earlier date or of his own time, but rather have divined the future achievements of painting; or Pope must have thought that those witnesses themselves were not sufficiently trustworthy to outweigh the palpable evidence afforded by the language which, so to speak, the shield of the artist itself expressed. Let who will adopt the first position, the second at least will convince nobody who knows anything more of the history of the art than the mere *data* which the chronicler supplies. For such

a person will believe that Painting in Homer's time was still in its childhood, not only because a Pliny or a like author says so, but especially because, having regard to the works of art which the ancients mention, he concludes that for many hundred years after this epoch Painting had made little progress. For instance, the pictures of a Polygnotus would not approach to the test to which Pope thinks the pictures of the Homeric shield should be subjected. The two great pictures of this master at Delphi, of which Pausanias<sup>9</sup> has left us so circumstantial a description, were clearly without perspective. This part of the art must be altogether denied to the ancients, and the proofs which Pope adduces to show that Homer possessed the idea of perspective only prove that Pope himself had a very imperfect conception of it<sup>10</sup>.

That he was not a stranger (Pope says) to aerial *perspective* appears in his expressly marking the distance of object from object. He tells us, for instance, that the two spies lay a little remote from the other figures; and that the oak under which was spread the banquet of the reapers, stood *apart*. What he says of the valley sprinkled all over with cottages and flocks, appears to be a description of a large country in perspective; and indeed a general argument for this may be drawn from the number of figures on the shield, which could not be all expressed in their full magnitude; and this is therefore a sort of proof that the art of lessening them according to perspective was known at that time. (Pope, *Works*, v, 138.)

Merely to observe the law of optical experience that a thing in the distance appears smaller than one close at hand is far from putting the picture in perspective. Perspective requires a single point of sight, a defined natural horizon, and this was wanting in the old pictures. The ground plan in the pictures of Polygnotus was not horizontal, but the background was so much raised that the figures

which ought to appear to stand one behind another, appeared to stand one above the other. And if this disposition of separate figures and their groups was general, as we may conclude from the old bas-reliefs, where the hindmost figures always stand higher than the foremost, and look over them : then it is natural to suppose the same in the description of Homer and not unnecessarily to separate those of his figures, which he allows to be combined in one picture. The double scene of the city at peace through whose streets moves the joyous procession of a nuptial feast, while in the market-place an important law suit is being tried, does not necessarily require a double picture ; and Homer might well consider it as a single one, while he put before us the whole city from so raised a point of sight, that he thereby opened a clear view simultaneously both of the streets and of the market-place.

I am of opinion that the true perspective was introduced into pictures accidentally, through the medium of scene-painting ; and although that was already in perfection, it could not have been so easy to apply the rules of it to a flat surface, since even in the later pictures discovered in the ruins of Herculaneum, we find so many and such various faults of perspective as we should now hardly pardon in a beginner<sup>11</sup>. But I spare myself the trouble of collecting my scattered remarks upon this single point, of which I am justified in expecting the most complete treatment in the history of Art, which Herr Winkelmann has promised to give us<sup>12</sup>.

## CHAPTER XX

It is better that I should return to my path : if one who takes a walk for his pleasure can be said to have a path. What I have said generally with respect to corporeal objects, is so much the more applicable to beautiful corporeal objects. Corporeal beauty is the result of the harmonious action of various parts which can be taken in at a glance. It requires therefore that these parts should lie near each other ; and therefore things whose parts lie near each other are the proper object of painting : this art and this alone can imitate corporeal beauty. The poet who can only describe the elements of beauty, one after the other, abstains altogether from painting corporeal beauty as beauty. He feels that these elements arranged in succession cannot possibly produce the effect which they have when arranged in juxta-position or as co-existing ; that the concentrating glance, which, after their enumeration, we wish to throw back upon them, in order to observe them all at once, does not secure to us an harmonious whole : that it passes the imagination of man to represent to himself what effect this mouth and this nose and these eyes taken together produce, unless we can recollect a similar composition of such parts in nature or in art. And here also Homer is the model of all models. He says : Niscus was beautiful ; Achilles was yet more beautiful ; Helen possessed a divine beauty : but he never allows himself to enter into a more detailed description of these beauties. Nevertheless the whole poem is built upon the beauty of Helen. How greatly a modern poet would have luxuriated in the description of it ! Constantine Manasses

desired to adorn his bald chronicle with a picture of Helen : I must thank him for the attempt. For I really do not think I could otherwise have found an example which so clearly demonstrated how foolish it is to attempt to do that which Homer has wisely left unattempted. When I read in him <sup>1</sup> :

Ἦν ἡ γυνὴ περικαλλὴς, εὖοφρος, εὐχρυσιάτῃ,  
 Εὐπάρειος εὐπρόσωπος, βοῶπις, χιονόχρους,  
 Ἐλικοβλέφαρος, ἄβρᾶ, χαρίτων γέμον ἄλσος  
 Λευκοβραχίων τρυφερὰ, κάλλος ἀντικρυς ἔμπνουν,  
 Τὸ πρόσωπον κατάλευκον, ἡ παρειὰ ροδόχρους,  
 Τὸ πρόσωπον ἐπίχαρι, τὸ βλέφαρον ὡραῖον.  
 Κάλλος ἀνεπιτήδευτον, ἀβάπτιστον, αὐτόχρουν,  
 Ἐβαπτε τὴν λευκότητα ροδόχρια πυρίνη,  
 Ὡς εἴ τις τὸν ἐλέφαντα βάψει λαμπρᾷ πορφυρᾷ  
 Δειρὴ μακρὰ, κατάλευκος, ὅθεν ἐμυθουργήθη  
 Κυκλιγενὴ τὴν εὖοπτον Ἐλένην χρηματίζειν

it seems to me that I see stones rolled up a mountain, out of which on the top a superb building is meant to be erected ; but all of which of their own accord roll down again upon the other side. What sort of image does this pomp of words leave upon our minds? What was Helen's appearance? If a thousand men were to read the description, would not all the thousand form their own separate idea of it? But it may be said with truth that the *versus politici*<sup>2</sup> of a monk are not poetry. Listen then to Ariosto when he describes his bewitching Alcina<sup>3</sup> :

Di persona era tanto ben formata,  
 Quanto me' finger san pittori industri ;  
 Con bionda chioma lunga ad annodata :  
 Oro non è che più risplenda e lustri.  
 Spargeasi per la guancia delicata  
 Misto color di rose e di ligustri :  
 Di terso avorio era la fronte lieta,  
 Che lo spazio finia con giusta meta.

Sotto duo negri e sottilissimi archi  
 Son duo negri occhi, anzi duo chiari soli,  
 Pictosi a riguardare, a mover parehi ;  
 Intorno a cui par ch' Amor scherzi e voli,

E ch' indi tutta la faretra scarchi,  
 E che visibilmente i cori involi :  
 Quindi il naso per mezzo il viso scende,  
 Che non trova l' invidia ove l' emende.

Sotto quel sta, quasi fra due vallette,  
 La bocca sparsa di natio cinabro :  
 Quivi due filze son di perle elette,  
 Che chiude ed apre un bello e dolce labro ;  
 Quindi escon le cortesi parolette  
 Da render molle ogni cor rozzo e scabro ;  
 Quivi si forma quel suave riso  
 Ch' apre a sua posta in terra il paradiso.

Bianca neve è il bel collo, e' l petto latte :  
 Il collo è tondo, il petto colmo o largo.  
 Due pome acerbe, e pur d' avorio fatte,  
 Vengono e van come onda al primo margo  
 Quando piacevole aura il mar combatte.  
 Non potria l' altre parte veder Argo :  
 Ben si può giudicar che corrisponda  
 A quel ch' appar di fuor quel che s' asconde.

Mostran le braccia sua misura giusta  
 E la candida man spesso si vede  
 Lunghetta alquanto e di larghezza angusta,  
 Dove nè nodo appar, nè vena eccede.  
 Si vede al fin d'ella persona angusta,  
 Il breve, ascinto o ritondetto piede.  
 Gli angelici sembianti nati in cielo  
 Non si ponno celar sotto alcun velo.

*Orlando Furioso*, Canto vii, st. 111-16.

### Milton says of Pandemonium,

The work some praise,  
 And some the architect <sup>4</sup>

The praise of one is not always the praise of the other. A work of art may be deserving of all praise, and yet may not contribute in any special manner to the fame of the artist. On the other hand, an artist may justly lay claim to our admiration, when his work does not give us full satisfaction. This should never be forgotten, and it will often serve to reconcile entirely contradictory judgments. As in the following case. Dolce, in his dialogue on Painting, makes his Aretino burst into extraordinary praise of the stanzas<sup>5</sup> of Ariosto, which have just been cited ; I, on the other hand, select them as an example of a picture without a picture.

Both of us are right. Dolce admires in them the knowledge of corporeal beauty which the poet displays ; I only look to the effect which this knowledge, expressed in words, has upon my imagination. Dolce concludes from this knowledge that a good poet must be an equally good painter ; and I judge from the effect that what the painter can best express, through the medium of lines and colours, is worst expressed by words alone. Dolce recommends the description of Ariosto to all painters as the most perfect type of a beautiful woman. And I recommend it to all poets as the most instructive warning ; that what Ariosto has failed in, no person with still less chance of success should attempt. It may be that when Ariosto says

*Di persona era tanto ben formata,  
Quanto me' <sup>6</sup> finger san pittori industri,*

that he thereby shows himself to have as perfectly understood the doctrine of proportions, as the most industrious artist who has studied them in nature and in the ancient models<sup>7</sup>. He may have shown himself by these words alone

*Spargeasi per la guancia delicata  
Misto color di rose e di ligustri*

to be a most perfect colourist, a Titian<sup>8</sup>.

It may be an inference from the fact that because he has only compared the hair of Alcina with gold, and has not called the hair golden, that he disapproved of the use of actual gold in the mixing of colours.<sup>9</sup> It may be possible that in her straight nose

*Quindi il naso per mezzo il viso scende*

is to be found the profile of that ancient type of nose of the Greek artists which the Romans borrowed<sup>10</sup>. But how does all this erudition and knowledge profit us readers, who wish to imagine they see a beautiful woman, who wish to feel in some degree that gentle agitation of the blood which accompanies the actual sight of beauty ?



If the poet knows of what proportions a beautiful form is composed, does that make us know it also? And, if we do also know it, does he make us see these proportions? Or does he in the least facilitate the effort of imagination to recall them clearly and vividly before us? A forehead enclosed within proper limits,

La fronte  
Che lo spazio finia con giusta meta

a nose than which envy could find nothing better,

Che non trova l' invidia ove l' emende

a hand somewhat long and narrow,

Lunghetta alquanto, e di larghezza angusta.

What sort of image do these common places suggest? There might be something to say for them in the mouth of a drawing master, who wishes to direct the attention of his pupils to the beauties of an academic model; for with a glance at this model they see the proper limits of a serene forehead, the beautifully cut nostril and the narrowness of the delicate hand. But in the poet I see nothing, and I feel with disgust the failure of my best efforts to see something.

In this point in which Virgil by his abstinence has imitated Homer, he has been tolerably successful. Even his Dido is nothing more than *pulcherrima Dido*. When he describes her more in detail it is by her rich dress, her sumptuous attire:

Tandem progreditur . . .  
Sidoniam picto chlamydem circi mdata limbo;  
Cui pharetra ex auro, crines nodantur in anrum,  
Aurea purpuream subnectit fibula vestem: 11

And if an attempt should be made to apply to him what the ancient artist said to a scholar who had painted a richly attired Helen: 'It is because you could not paint her beautiful that you have painted her rich'; then Virgil would reply, 'It is not my fault that I have not been able to paint her beauti-

ful : the blame is due to the limits of my art : it is my praise to have kept myself within these limits'.

Here I must not forget the two odes of Anacreon, in which he analyses the beauty of his maiden and her Bathyllus<sup>12</sup>. The turn which he gives it carries it off. He imagines that he has a painter before him and causes him to work under his eyes. 'Make me' says he, 'in this way the hair, in this way the forehead, in this way the eyes, in this way the mouth, in this way the neck and bosom, in this way the hips and the hands!' In this way what the artist can only put together part by part, the poet can only part by part direct him to do. His intention is not, that, in this oral direction to the painter, we should know and feel the full beauty of the beloved object. He himself feels the insufficiency of expression by words, and therefore has recourse to the expression by art, the illusions of which he so magnifies, that the ode appears to be more a song of praise upon the art than upon his mistress. It is not her portrait but herself which he sees, and fancies that she is going to open her mouth to speak to him :

*Ἀπέχει βλέπω γὰρ αὐτήν.  
Τάχα, κηρὲ, καὶ λαλήσεις.*

So in the portrait of Bathyllus the praise of the beautiful youth is so interwoven with the praise of the art and the artist, that it is doubtful to the honour of which Anacreon has destined his ode. He collects the most beautiful parts from various pictures, of which the principal characteristic was the especial beauty of these parts. He takes the neck from an Adonis, the breast and hands from a Mercury, the hips from a Pollux, the belly from a Bacchus ; until he sees the entire Bathyllus in an Apollo perfectly finished by the painter.

*Μετὰ δὲ πρόσωπον ἔστω,  
Τὸν Ἀδώνιδος παρελθὼν,  
Ἐλεφάντινος τράχηλος.*

Μεταμάξιον δὲ ποίει  
 Δίδυμάς τε χεῖρας Ἑρμοῦ,  
 Πολυδεύκεος δὲ μηροῦς  
 Διονύσιον δὲ νηδὺν  
 Τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα δὲ τοῦτον  
 Καθελὼν, ποίει Βάθυλλον.

In the same way Lucian can give us no other idea of the beauty of Panthea than by referring us to the most beautiful female statues of the ancient artists<sup>13</sup>. But what is this but to confess that language for this purpose is powerless; that poetry stammers and eloquence is dumb, unless art in some measure assist them as an interpreter?

## CHAPTER XXI

BUT does not poetry suffer too great a loss if we take away from her all images of corporeal beauty? Who wishes to take them away? If we seek to prevent her pursuing a particular path, by which she expects to arrive at such images, while she follows the footsteps of a sister art, but in which she painfully wanders up and down without ever reaching the same goal: do we therefore close every other path to her, even those in which Art in her turn must follow her a great distance?

Even Homer, who so carefully abstains from all detailed description of corporeal beauty, from whom we barely learn, even parenthetically, that Helen has white arms<sup>1</sup> and beautiful hair<sup>2</sup>, even this poet knows nevertheless how to give us an idea of her beauty, which far surpasses all that art is capable of representing to us.

Let us only remember the passage in which Helen appears before the Council of the Trojan Elders. The venerable old men gaze on her, and one says to the other:

Οὐ νέμεσις Τρώας καὶ ἑυκνήμιδας Ἀχαιοὺς  
Τοιῇδ' ἀμφὶ γυναικὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἔλγεα πᾶσχειν·  
Αἰνῶς ἀθανάτησι θεῆς εἰς ὧπα ἔοικεν<sup>3</sup>

What can convey to us a more lively idea of beauty than that cold old age should think it justified the woe which had cost so much blood and so many tears?<sup>4</sup>

What Homer could not describe in detail he makes us understand by the effect: oh! poets, paint for us the pleasure, inclination, love, rapture, which beauty causes, and you will have painted

beauty itself. Who can think that the beloved object of Sappho, at the sight of whom she confesses to have lost sense and judgment, was ugly? Who does not believe that he has seen the most beautiful and perfect form the moment he sympathises with the emotions which only such a form can awaken?

It is not because Ovid describes the different parts of the beautiful body of his Lesbia, in the lines,

Quos humeros, quales vidi tetigique lacertos !  
 Forma papillarum quam fuit apta premi !  
 Quam castigato planus sub pectore venter !  
 Quantum et quale latus ! quam juvenile femur !

but it is because he describes them with that inebriating voluptuousness which so readily awakens our desires, that we imagine ourselves to enjoy the sight which he enjoyed.

Another way by which poetry attains the end of painting in the description of corporeal beauty, is by changing beauty into grace. Grace is beauty in <sup>5</sup> motion, and therefore less within the province of the painter than the poet. The painter can only create a presumption of motion, in reality however his figures are without motion. Consequently grace with him borders on grimace. But in poetry it remains what it is : a transitory beauty which we wish to see repeated. It comes and goes : and as we can generally more easily and more vividly remember a motion than a mere form or colour : it follows that grace in the same proportions will produce a stronger impression upon us than beauty. All that in the picture of Alcina pleases and excites us is grace. The impression which her eyes make is not in consequence of their being black and fiery, but because they are

*Pietosi à riguardar, à mover parchi*

have a look of sweetness and languor : that love flutters round them and discharges his whole quiver from them. Her mouth charms us not because her

vermilion lips disclose two rows of choice pearl : but because they form that love-inspiring smile which of itself opens paradise upon earth : because from them come those friendly words which soften the roughest heart. Her bosom enchants us less because milk and ivory and apples are the image of their whiteness and exquisite form—but rather because we see them gently undulate like the waves on the extremest edge of the shore when a playful zephyr agitates the sea.

Due pome acerba, o pur d' avorio fatte,  
Vengono e van, come onda al primo margo  
Quando piacevole aura il mar combatte.

I am certain that such traits of grace compressed into one or two stanzas would have produced more effect than the five others, over which Ariosto has scattered them, interweaving with them cold indications of a beautiful form, in a manner far too learned to affect our feelings.

Anacreon himself preferred to err by an obvious impropriety, in requiring an impossibility from the painter, rather than not animate with grace the image of his mistress.

Τρυφεροῦ δ' ἔσω γενείου,  
Περὶ λυγδίνῃ τραχήλῳ  
Χάριτες πέτοιιντο πᾶσαι.

'Let all the graces hover over her soft chin and her marble neck'. How did he intend this? in the most literal meaning? It was incapable of execution by the painter. The painter could give the chin its finest round—its most beautiful dimple *amoris digitulo impressum* (for the ἔσω appears to me to indicate a dimple), he could give the most beautiful carnation to the neck : but he could go no further. The movement of this beautiful neck, the play of the muscles, by which the dimple became more or less visible, the special grace was beyond the reach of his power. The poet used the most

forcible expressions of his art to make beauty visible to us, in order that the painter might make use of the most forcible expression of his art. A new illustration of our former remark that the poet, even when he speaks of works of Art, is not on that account obliged to confine himself within the boundaries of Art.

## CHAPTER XXII

ZEUXIS<sup>1</sup> painted a Helen, and had the courage to write underneath it the famous lines of Homer, in which the enraptured old men confess their emotion. Never have Painting and Poetry been in such equal competition. The victory remains undecided, both deserve to be crowned.

For as the wise poet shows only in its effect that beauty which he felt himself unable to paint in detail; so does the not less wise painter show us beauty only by its details, and holds it unbecoming his art to have recourse to any other expedient. His picture consists only of the single figure of Helen, which was naked. For it is probable that this was the Helen which he painted for Crotona<sup>2</sup>.

Let us, for the sake of the curiosity of the fact, compare with this picture that which Caylus prescribes to young painters, founding his advice on these lines of Homer

Helen, covered with a white veil, appears in the midst of several old men, among whom is Priam distinguished by marks of royal dignity. The artist must take especial pains to make apparent the triumph of beauty in the greedy<sup>3</sup> looks and in all the outward expressions of bewildered astonishment upon the faces of these frigid old men. The scene is above one of the gates of the city. The background is lost, either in the open sky or against the loftier buildings of the city: the former is the bolder achievement, but one is as suitable as the other.

Let us suppose that this picture was executed by the greatest painter of our time, and put in competition with the work of Zeuxis. Which would indicate the real triumph of beauty? The latter which



I feel myself? or the former in which I am to extract it from the grimaces of the excited greybeards? *turpe senilis amor*—a greedy look makes the most honoured face ridiculous, and a greybeard who manifests the desires of youth is so far an object of disgust. The Homeric old men are not liable to this reproach: for the emotion which they feel is a momentary spark which their wisdom immediately stifles. It suffices to do honour to Helen without disgracing them. They avow their feeling and immediately add

Ἄλλὰ καὶ ὧς, τοίη περ ξοῦς', ἐν νηυσὶ νεέσθω,  
Μηδ' ἡμῖν τεκέεσσ' ἵ τ' ὀπίσσω πῆμα λίποιτο <sup>4</sup>

Without this resolution they would be old fools: they would be what they must appear to be in the picture of Caylus. And what is the object upon which they direct their greedy looks? <sup>5</sup> Upon a disguised veiled figure. Is that Helen? It is to me inconceivable how Caylus could leave her the veil. It is true that Homer expressly gives it to her

Αὐτίκα δ' ἀργεννήσι καλυψαμένη ὀδόνῃσιν  
ᾠρμάτ' ἐκ θαλάμοιο·

but in order that she may pass through the streets: and even if Homer had described the wonderment of the old men before she had lifted up or taken off her veil, it was not the first time that they had seen her: their avowal therefore did not necessarily arise from their momentary glimpse at this time, but they might often have felt what they then, for the first time, confessed they felt. This could find no place in the picture. If in it I see enraptured old men, I see also the cause of their rapture: and I am greatly surprised to see, as I have said, no more than a disguised veiled figure on which they had fixed their passionate gaze. What is there of Helen in this? Her white veil and something of the outline of her fair proportions, so far as they could be

visible, through the folds of the garment. Perhaps, however, it was not the intention of the Count that her face should be covered, and he speaks of the veil merely as a portion of her attire. If this be so (his language is scarcely capable of such a construction, *Hélène couverte d'un voile blanc*) then I have a new subject for my astonishment: he gives the artists most careful instructions as to the expression upon the faces of the Elders: and says not a word on the beauty of the face of Helen. That modest beauty, that eye moist and glittering with the tear of repentance, as she draws near with fear. How is this? Is the highest beauty so familiar to our artists that they do not need to be at all reminded of it? or is expression more than beauty? And are we accustomed to see in pictures, as on the stage, the ugliest actress play the part of an enchanting princess if her prince only expresses a sufficiently warm love for her?

In truth: the picture of Caylus bears the same relation to the picture of Zeuxis that pantomime bears to the most sublime poetry.

Homer was certainly more diligently read in ancient times than he now is<sup>6</sup>. Nevertheless we do not find a great many pictures mentioned, which the ancient painters took from him<sup>7</sup>. What they appear to have most industriously availed themselves of, were the indications which the poet gives of certain peculiarities of corporeal beauty: these they painted and were well convinced, that, with regard to these objects alone, it was permitted to them to compete with Homer. Besides Helen, Zeuxis painted also Penelope; and the Diana of Apelles was the Homeric Diana, accompanied by her nymphs. I will take this opportunity of observing that the passage in Pliny which describes the latter, requires correction<sup>8</sup>. But it does not appear to have been agreeable to the taste of the old artists to paint actions taken from Homer—merely because they furnished rich composition,

advantageous contrasts, and happy effects of light, and this could not have been agreeable to their taste so long at least as art confined itself within the narrow limits which its highest end required. They nourished themselves by way of compensation on the spirit of the poet; they filled their imagination with his most sublime traits; the fire of his enthusiasm inflamed theirs; they saw and felt as he did: and so their works became copies of the Homeric poem, not in the relation of a portrait to the original, but in the relation of a son to a father; resembling, yet different. The resemblance often lies in a single trait; all the other features have nothing in common between them but a general harmony with the resembling feature as well as with the others.

It remains to observe, that all the masterpieces of Homer were older than any masterpiece of art; for Homer had looked at nature with the eye of a painter, long before Phidias or Apelles. So it is not to be wondered at that these artists found many very valuable observations, before they had time to make them for themselves in nature, made by Homer, where they eagerly seized upon them, in order through Homer to imitate nature. Phidias confessed that the lines<sup>9</sup>

Ἦ, καὶ κυανέησιν ἐπ' ὀφρύσι νεῦσε Κρονίων·  
 Ἀμβρόσιαι δ' ἔρα χαῖται ἐπεβρώσαντο ἄνακτος  
 Κρατὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο· μέγαν δ' ἐλέλιξεν Ὀλυμπόν·

furnished him with the type of his Olympian Jupiter, and that it was only through his assistance he attained to the god-like countenance *propetodum ex ipso caelo petitum*.

Whoever thinks that in this language no more is said, than that the fancy of the artist was kindled by the sublime image of the poet, and so rendered capable of a more sublime representation, appears to me to overlook what is most essential, and to

content himself with a very general explanation, when greater research would have furnished him with one much more satisfactory, and resting on much broader foundations. As far as my opinion goes, Phidias at the same time confessed that he had in this passage first remarked how much expression lies in the eyebrows, *quanta pars animi*<sup>10</sup> shows itself in them. Perhaps that it first induced him to bestow greater care and labour upon the hair, in order in some measure to express what Homer calls Ambrosian hair. For it is certain that the ancient artists, before the time of Phidias, little understood the language and the significance of physiognomy and especially had greatly neglected the hair. Even Myron was censurable on both these points, as Pliny remarks<sup>11</sup>; and even after his time Pythagoras Leontinus was the first who distinguished himself by his delicate sculpture of hair<sup>12</sup>: What Phidias learnt from Homer the other artists learnt from the works of Phidias.

I will produce an example of this kind which has always been very satisfactory to me. Let us remember what Hogarth has said about the Belvidere Apollo<sup>13</sup>: 'These two masterpieces of Art are seen together in the same palace at Rome, where the Antinous fills the spectator with admiration only, whilst the Apollo strikes him with surprise, and, as travellers express themselves with an appearance of something *more than human*; which they of course are always at a loss to describe: and this effect, they say, is the more astonishing, as upon examination its disproportion is evident even unto a common eye. One of the best sculptors we have in England, who lately went to see them, confirmed to me what has been now said, particularly as to the legs and thighs being too long, and too large for the upper parts. And Andrea Sacchi, one of the great Italian painters, seems to have been of the same opinion, or he would hardly have given his Apollo, crowning Pasquini the musician, the exact

proportion of the Antinous (in a famous picture now in England), as otherwise it seems to be a direct copy from the Apollo'. He adds—

Although in very great works we often see an inferior part neglected, yet here it cannot be the case, because in a fine statue, just proportion is one of its essential beauties : therefore it stands to reason that these limbs must have been lengthened on purpose, otherwise it might easily have been avoided.

So that if we examine the beauties of this figure thoroughly, we may reasonably conclude that what has been hitherto thought so unaccountably *excellent* in its general appearance, hath been owing to what hath seemed a *blemish* in a part of it.

All this is very instructive ; and even Homer, I may add, had discovered and pointed out that there is a dignity in figures which arises merely from this addition to stature in the elongation of the foot and leg. For when Antenor wishes to compare the appearance of Ulysses with the appearance of Menelaus, he says<sup>14</sup>

Στάντων μὲν Μενέλαος ὑπείρεχεν εὐρέας ὤμους,  
Ἄμφω δ' ἐζομένω, γεραρότερος ἦεν Ὀδυσσεύς.

When both stood, Menelaus towered above by his broad shoulders : but when both sat Ulysses had the most imposing appearance.

Ulysses gained in dignity from sitting, and Menelaus lost it from the same posture ; it is easy to determine the relation which the upper part of the body in each bore to the lower part. Ulysses had somewhat an exaggeration of size in the former, Menelaus in the latter.

## CHAPTER XXIII

ONE single unbecoming part may disturb the harmonious effect of many others in the production of beauty ; nevertheless the object will not on that account alone be ugly. Even ugliness requires many disagreeable parts, all of which we must perceive at the same time, in order to make us feel the sensation opposite to that which beauty makes us feel.

Ugliness, therefore, considered in itself, cannot be the object of poetry ; and nevertheless Homer has painted the extreme of ugliness in his Thersites, and has painted it by describing all the co-existent parts of it. Why did he permit himself to do that with respect to ugliness which he so wisely refrained from doing with respect to beauty ? Is not the effect of ugliness as much hindered by the detailed enumeration of its elements, as the effect of beauty is destroyed by the like enumeration of its elements ?

Undoubtedly it is ; but herein lies the justification of Homer. It is precisely because ugliness by this painting of the poet is reduced to a less disgusting appearance of corporeal imperfection, and, so to speak, with respect to its result, ceases to be ugliness, that the poet is enabled to make use of it ; and what he is unable to use for itself, he uses as an ingredient, in order to produce and to strengthen in us certain mixed sensations, with which he is obliged to entertain us in the absence of purely agreeable sensations. These mixed sensations are the ridiculous and the horrible.

Homer makes Thersites hideous, in order to make him ridiculous. But it is not through his ugliness alone that he becomes ridiculous ; for ugliness is a correction, and to produce the ridiculous, a

contrast between perfection and imperfection is required.

This is the explanation of my friend<sup>1</sup>, to which I would add this contrast must not be too rough and too sharp, that the *Opposita*, to use the language of the painter, must be such as can blend with each other. The wise and good Aesop would not be ridiculous if you gave him the ugliness of Thersites. It was a stupid monk's trick to attempt to transfer to his person, by reason of its deformity, the *τῆλασιον* of his very instructive fables. For a deformed body and a beautiful soul are like oil and vinegar, which, however we may shake them together, remain always distinct to the taste. They do not produce a third sentiment, the body excites displeasure, the soul pleasure; each its own sentiment for itself. It is only when the deformed body is at once infirm and sick, when it hinders the soul in its operations, when it becomes the source of injurious prejudices against itself, then displeasure and pleasure flow together; but the new phenomenon which results from this is not ridicule but compassion, and the object, which without this would only have possessed our esteem, becomes interesting to us. The deformed and sickly Pope must have been far more interesting to his friends than the handsome and healthy Wicherley was to his. But if Thersites<sup>2</sup> was not made ridiculous by ugliness alone, he would not have been ridiculous without ugliness. This ugliness, and the conformity of this ugliness with his character; the contradiction which both presented to the idea which he entertained of his own importance; the injurious effect of his malevolent garrulity, humiliating in its result to himself alone: all must work together for this end. The last circumstance is the *οὐ φθαρτικόν*<sup>3</sup>, which Aristotle considers as indispensable to the ridiculous. My friend<sup>4</sup> (Mendelssohn) considers it also to be a necessary condition that the required contrast be of no importance, and does not interest us very much.

For let us remember that if Thersites himself had been punished for his malignant depreciation of Agamemnon by death, instead of by a blow raising two bloody weals, we should cease to laugh. For this monster of a man is still a man, whose destruction must always appear to us as a greater evil than all his crimes and vices. In order to be aware of this, we have only to read the account of his death by Quintus Calaber<sup>5</sup>. Achilles regrets having slain Penthesilea ; her beauty, covered with her blood so bravely shed, excites the high esteem and sympathy of the hero : high esteem and sympathy become love. The calumniating Thersites makes this love a crime, He rages against volup-tuousness which seduces the bravest man into follies

‘Ητ’ ἀφρονα φῶτα τίθησι  
Καὶ πινυτὸν περ ξυντα.

Achilles is enraged, and, without saying a word, smites him so cruelly between the cheek and the ear, that his teeth, his blood, and his soul are vomited out at the same time. It is too dreadful. The furious homicide Achilles becomes more odious to me than the envious, grumbling Thersites. The scream of joy which the Greeks utter at this act revolts me, and I take the side of Diomedes, who has already drawn his sword to avenge the murder of his kinsman ; for I feel that Thersites is also akin to me, that he is a man<sup>6</sup>.

Let us, however, suppose that the instigations of Thersites had broken out into mutiny, that the rebellious people had really embarked in the ships, and had treacherously deserted their leaders, that their leaders had fallen into the hands of a foe thirsting for vengeance, and that a divine punishment had caused the entire destruction of the fleet and people : how would the ugliness of Thersites have then appeared to us ? If impotent ugliness may appear ridiculous, harmful ugliness is at all times horrible. I do not know how to illustrate this



better than by the citation of two admirable passages from Shakspeare. Edmund, the bastard of the Earl of Gloster, in *King Lear*, is not a less miscreant than Richard, Duke of Gloucester, who has made his way by perpetrating the most horrible enormities to the throne, which, under the name of Richard the Third, he ascended. But how comes it to pass that the former does not excite the same amount of shuddering and horror as the latter? When I hear the bastard say<sup>7</sup>

Thou, Nature, art my goddess ; to thy law  
My services are bound. Wherefore should I  
Stand in the place of custom, and permit  
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,  
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines  
Lag of a brother? why bastard? Wherefore base?  
When my dimensions are as well compact,  
My mind as generous, and my shape as true  
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they thus  
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?  
Who in the lusty stealth of Nature take  
More composition and fierce quality  
Than doth within a dull, stale, tired bed,  
Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,  
Got 'tween asleep and wake?

Here I hear a devil, but I see in him the form of an angel of light. On the other hand, when I hear the Duke of Gloucester say

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,  
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;  
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty  
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;  
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,  
Cheat'd of feature by dissembling nature,  
Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time  
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,  
And that so lamely and unfashionably,  
The dogs bark at me as I halt by them:  
Why I (in this weak piping time of peace)  
Have no delight to pass away the time,  
Unless to see my shadow in the sun,  
And descant on my own deformity;  
And, therefore, since I cannot prove a lover  
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,  
I am determin'd to prove a villain.

Here I hear a devil and see a devil—in the form which the devil alone should have.

## CHAPTER XXIV

THIS is the use which the poet makes of personal ugliness ; what use can the painter make of it ?

Painting, considered as an imitative art, can express ugliness ; painting, considered as a fine art, will not express it. In the former category, all visible objects are within its province ; in the latter category it includes only those visible objects which awaken agreeable sensations\*. But do not disagreeable sensations please us in imitation ? Not all. A discerning critic has already remarked this on the subject of disgust :

The representations of fear, he says, of sadness, horror, compassion, etc., can only excite our aversion in so far as we suppose them to be caused by an evil which is real. These may be resolved into agreeable sensations by the recollection that they are illusions produced by art. But the contrary sensation of disgust ensues upon the mere representation of it to the soul, by virtue of a law of the imagination, whether the object is considered to be real or not. What does it matter to the offended imagination that there is exhibited to it, in whatever degree of excellence, the imitative art ? The aversion did not arise from the presumption that the evil was real, but from the mere representation itself, and this is real. The sensations of disgust come always from nature, never from the imitation<sup>1</sup>.

The same may be said of the ugliness of forms. This ugliness affronts our sight, runs counter to our taste for order and harmony, and excites aversion, without regard to the actual existence of the object

\* See passages from Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* at the end of this chapter. R. P.

in which we perceive it. We do not like to see Thersites in reality or in a picture; and if we less dislike his picture, that is not because the ugliness of his form ceases to be ugliness in the picture, but because we have the power to abstract ourselves from this ugliness, and to please ourselves exclusively with the art of the painter. But even this gratification is marred every moment by reflecting on the bad application which is made of art, and this reflection will seldom fail to bring with it a low estimation of the artist.

Aristotle<sup>2</sup> assigns another cause why things which we see with repugnance in their own nature, give satisfaction in their representation, when most accurate: the reason is the universal curiosity of man. We are sensible of enjoyment when either we can learn from the copy *τι ἕκαστον*, what each thing is; or when we can conclude from it *ὅτι οὗτος ἐκείνος*, that it is this or that object. But no conclusion can be drawn in favour of the imitation of ugliness. The satisfaction which springs from the gratification of our desire is momentary, and is only accidentally incident to the object which gratifies us; the dissatisfaction, on the other hand, which accompanies the aspect of ugliness is permanent, and is essential to the object which awakens it. How can the former balance the latter? Still less can the small amusement which the observation of similarity affords us, overcome the disagreeable effect of ugliness. The closer I compare the hateful imitation with the hateful original, the more I expose myself to this effect, so that the pleasure of comparison soon vanishes, and leaves me nothing but the disagreeable impression of double ugliness. To judge by the examples which Aristotle gives, he appears as if he had not himself meant to consider the ugliness of form as belonging to the category of disagreeable objects which give pleasure in the imitation. These examples are savage beasts and corpses. Savage beasts excite horror even when

they are not ugly, and it is this horror, not their ugliness, which in imitation becomes lost in a feeling of satisfaction. So also with corpses.<sup>3</sup> It is the sharper feeling of sympathy, the terrifying thought of our own future annihilation, which in nature makes a corpse to be a revolting object. In the imitation, however, this sympathy loses, from a perception of the deceit, its painfulness, and, as to the fatal recollection, the addition of flattering circumstances either entirely withdraws us from it, or is so inseparably connected with it, that it appears to us rather as an attractive than a terrifying object. As therefore the ugliness of forms on account of the sensation it excites is disagreeable, and yet does not belong to that class of disagreeable sensations which in imitation are changed into those that are agreeable, and cannot of itself be the object of painting as a fine art; it remains to be seen whether it cannot, as in poetry, be made useful as an ingredient to strengthen other sensations. Can painting, in order to produce the ridiculous and the terrible, make use of ugly forms?

I will not venture to answer this question with a direct negative. It is indisputable that impotent ugliness may become ridiculous in painting; especially if an affectation of grace and dignity be united with it. It is equally incontestable that ugliness with the power to injure excites in painting, as well as in nature, horror, and that this ridicule and this horror, which in themselves are mixed sensations, obtain in imitation an increased power, the former of attractiveness, the latter of offensiveness.

I must, however, remember that nevertheless painting and poetry are not exactly in the same condition. In poetry, as I have remarked, the ugliness of form loses almost entirely its disagreeable effect, because it changes its co-existing into successive parts. Considered in this way, it ceases almost to be ugliness, and may be intimately united with other phenomena in order to produce a new and

special effect. In painting, on the contrary, ugliness has all its forces collected together, and has nearly as strong an effect as in nature herself. Impotent ugliness, therefore, cannot long remain ridiculous; the disagreeable sensation gets the upper hand, and that which in the first moment was ludicrous in the sequel becomes simply horrible. And it is the same with ugliness which has the power to injure, the horror gradually disappears and the deformity remains alone and unchangeable.

All this being considered, Count Caylus was perfectly right in omitting the episode of Thersites from the gallery of his Homeric pictures. But are we therefore right in wishing that it was absent from Homer itself? I am sorry to find that a learned man, otherwise of a very correct and fine taste, is of this opinion<sup>4</sup>. I reserve for another place a fuller discussion of this subject<sup>5</sup>.

## CHAPTER XXV

THE second distinction which the above-mentioned critic finds between disgust and other unpleasant emotions of the soul, is manifested in the displeasure which the ugliness of form excites in us.

Other unpleasing passions, he says, are able, not only in imitation, but even in nature herself, to flatter our natural disposition. This is because they never excite simple displeasure, but always mingle the bitterness of it with voluptuousness. Our Fear is rarely altogether without Hope ; Terror quickens all our faculties to avoid the danger ; Anger is combined with the desire for Vengeance ; Sorrow with the pleasant recollection of former Happiness ;<sup>1</sup> Sympathy is inextricably interwoven with the tender feelings of Love and Affection. The soul is at liberty to dwell at one time on the pleasing, at another on the displeasing elements of an affection, and to compound for itself a medley of what is pleasing and displeasing, which is more charming than the purely unmixed emotion of pleasure. Everybody who has paid any attention to himself must have often observed this. And how otherwise does it happen that to the Angry man his Anger, to the Sorrowing man his Sorrow, is more acceptable than all the joyous images with which we endeavour to tranquillise him ? But it is altogether a different case with disgust, and the emotions connected with it. The soul does not recognise in them any perceptible admiration of what is pleasing. What is displeasing gets the upper hand, and therefore there is no situation conceivable in Nature or in Imitative Art, in which the natural disposition does not recoil with aversion from a representation of this kind.

Quite true. But as the critic himself admits that other emotions are allied with that of disgust, and

which excite, as it does, aversion, what can be more closely allied to it than the perception of ugliness of form? This is also in Nature without the least admixture of Pleasure; and as it is equally incapable of it in imitation, there is no imaginable situation in which the natural disposition does not turn away with aversion from the representation of it. Yet this aversion, if, at least, I have analysed my feelings with sufficient accuracy, is altogether of the nature of disgust. The sensation which is inspired by ugliness of form is disgust, only in a less degree. It is true that this is at variance with another observation of the critic, according to which he believes that only the obtusest sense, taste, smell, and touch, are exposed to disgust. 'The two former,' he says, 'on account of an excessive sweetness, and the latter on account of too great softness of bodies which do not sufficiently withstand the excitable fibres. These objects become intolerable to the sight, but only by reason of the association of ideas, because it reminds us of the aversion which they create in the taste, smell, or touch. For, to speak accurately, there is no object of disgust to the sight.' Nevertheless I think it would be easy to mention some. A brand in the face, a hare-lip, a broken nose with projecting nostrils, an entire want of eyebrows, are ugliness which do not offend the smell, touch, or taste. Yet it is certain that we are conscious of a feeling which approaches much more nearly to disgust than that which is caused by other deformities of the body, such as a crooked foot or a humped back. The more delicate our temperament is, the more are we susceptible of those physical symptoms which precede the act of vomiting. It is true that these sensations soon disappear, and probably no vomiting takes place, the cause of which will be found to be, that they are objects of sight, which take in with them and in them a number of other circumstances, and in consequence of the agreeable images which they produce, the earlier

disagreeable images are so weakened and obscured that they have no decided influence over the body. The obtuser senses, on the contrary—the taste, the smell, the touch—when they are affected by disgusting objects, take no cognizance of other circumstances. The object of aversion, therefore, operates alone and in its full strength, and must necessarily be accompanied by a more violent sensation.

To the imitative arts the disgusting bears the same relation as the ugly. Indeed, as the disagreeable operation of the former is stronger, it can still less than the ugly become a subject either for Painting or for Poetry. Nevertheless, as it is capable of being softened in verbal expression, I may assert with confidence that the poet may use the disgusting features at least as an ingredient for those mixed sensations to which ugliness lends so great an assistance.

The disgusting can increase the ridiculous: in other words, the representation of moral worth, of dignity, put in contrast with the disgusting, become ridiculous. Many examples of this are to be found in Aristophanes. I remember the lizard which interrupted the astronomical speculations of the good Socrates<sup>2</sup>

ΜΑΘ. Πρώην δέ γε γνώμην μεγάλην ἀφηρέθη  
 'Υπ' ἀσκαλαβώτου. ΣΤΡ. Τίνα τρόπον ; κάτειπέ μοι.

ΜΑΘ. Ζητούντος αὐτοῦ τῆς σελήνης τὰς ὁδοὺς  
 Καὶ τὰς περιφορὰς, εἶτ' ἂν κεχηνότος  
 Ἀπὸ τῆς ὀροφῆς νύκτωρ γαλεώτης κατέχεσεν.

ΣΤΡ. Ἦσθην γαλεώτη καταχέσαντι Σωκράτους.

If you take away the disgusting character of what falls into his mouth, the ridiculous disappears at once. The drollest traits of this kind are to be found in the Hottentot narrative *Tquassouw* and *Knornmquaiha*, in the *Connoisseur*<sup>3</sup>, an English weekly paper which is ascribed to Lord Chesterfield. We know how filthy the Hottentots are, and how much there is which they esteem as delicate and holy



which only excites in us disgust and horror: a squashed nose, flabby breasts hanging down to the navel, the whole body anointed with a varnish of goat's fat, the locks clotted with grease, the feet and arms entwined with fresh entrails: conceive this to be the object of an ardent, reverential, tender love: let us imagine these details expressed in the noble language of earnest admiration, and abstain from laughing.

The disgusting appears to ally itself yet more closely with the terrible. What we call the horrible (*Grasliche*) is nothing more than a disgust with terror. In the picture of sorrow drawn by Hesiod<sup>4</sup>, the trait τῆς ἐκ μὲν ῥινῶν μόλαι ῥέον displeases Longinus<sup>5</sup>, not so much, as it seems to me, because it is a disgusting trait, as because it is nothing but a disgusting trait. For he does not seem to wish to blame the long nails stretching out beyond the fingers (μακροὶ δ' ὄνυχες χεῖρεσσιν ὑπῆσαν). Yet long nails are not less disgusting than a running nose. But the long nails<sup>6</sup> are at the same time terrible, for with them the cheeks are torn so that blood runs from them to the earth.

ἐκ δὲ παρειῶν  
Αἶμ' ἀπελείβειτ' ἔραζε.

On the other hand, a running nose is nothing but a running nose; and I only advise sorrow to shut her mouth. Let any one read in Sophocles the description of the desert cave of the wretched Philoctetes: no trace of provisions to support life or of ordinary appliances are to be seen, except a trodden heap of dry leaves, a shapeless wooden cup, some implements for the fire—the whole wealth of the diseased, deserted man! How does the poet fill up this sad and fearful picture? With the addition of a trait of disgust. 'Ha!' says Neoptolemus, shrinking with horror, 'here are torn pieces of rag put out to dry full of blood and matter'.

- NE. Ὅρῳ κενὴν οἴκησιν ἀνθρώπων δίχα.  
 ΟΔ. Οὐδ' ἔνδον οἰκοποιός ἐστί τις τροφή;  
 NE. Στειπτὴ γέφυλλας ὥς ἐναυλίζοντί τῳ.  
 ΟΔ. Τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἔρημα, κοῦδέν ἐσθ' ὑπόστεγον;  
 NE. Αὐτόξυλόν γ' ἔκπωμα, φλαυρούργου τινὸς  
 Τεχνήματ' ἀνδρὸς, καὶ πυρεῖ' ὁμοῦ τάδε.  
 ΟΔ. Κείνου τὸ θησαύρισμα σημαίνεις τόδε.  
 NE. Ἴον, ἰού· καὶ ταῦτά γ' ἄλλα θάλλεπται  
 ῥάκη βαρείας του νοσηλείας πλέα'.

So, in Homer, Hector dragged along his face covered with blood and dust, his hair matted together.

*Squalentem barbam et concretos sanguine crines* \*

(as Virgil says) is an object of disgust, but all the more on that account a more horrible and affecting object. Who can think of the punishment of Mar-syas in Ovid without a feeling of disgust? †

*Clamanti cutis est summos derepta per artus;  
 Nec quidquam, nisi vulnus, erat: cruor undique manat;  
 Detectique patent nervi, trepidaeque sine ulla  
 Pelle micant venae; salientia viscera possis  
 Et perlucentes numerare in pectore fibras.*

Who does not perceive that the disgusting is here in its right place? It makes the terrible horrible, and the horrible is of itself, in its own nature, if our sympathy be interested in it, not altogether unpleasing; how much less so in imitation! I will not multiply examples; but I must observe that there is a kind of terrible to which the poet can find his way open almost solely through the disgusting. It is the terror of hunger. Even in common life we express the extremest pressure of hunger, no otherwise than through the narrative of all the unnourishing, unwholesome, and thoroughly disgusting things with which the belly must perforce be satisfied. Since imitation cannot excite in us anything of the feeling of hunger, it takes refuge in another disagreeable sensation, but which, in the case of the most distressing hunger, we recognize as a less evil. This it seeks to excite in order to

make us infer from the unpleasant character of it how strong the unpleasant character of the other must be which makes us forget the loathsomeness which is present before us. Ovid says of the Oread, whom Ceres sent to hunger<sup>10</sup>

Hanc (Famem) procul ut vidit,  
 . . . refert mandata deae ; paulumque morata,  
 Quanquam aberat longe, quanquam modo venerat illuc,  
 Visa tamen sensisse Famem.

An unnatural exaggeration ! The sight of one who is hungry, and even if it were hunger itself has not this contagious power ; pity and horror and disgust the sight may cause, but not hunger. Of this horror Ovid has been lavish in his picture of *Fames* ; and in the hunger of Eresichthon, both in his account and that of Callimachus<sup>11</sup>, the most disgusting features are the strongest. After Eresichthon had devoured everything and had not spared even the sacrificial cow (which his mother had nourished for Vesta), Callimachus makes him fall upon horses and cats, and go begging in the streets for scraps and filthy remnants from the tables of strangers

Καὶ τὰν βῶν ἔφαγεν τὰν Ἑστία ἔτρεφε μήτηρ,  
 Καὶ τὸν ἀεθλοφόρον καὶ τὸν πολεμήϊον ἵππον.  
 Καὶ τὰν αἰλουρον, τὰν ἔτρεμε θηρία μικρά,  
 Καὶ τοῦθ' ὃ τῷ βασιλῆος ἐνὶ τριόδοισι καθήστο  
 Αἰτίζων ἀκόλως τε καὶ ἐκβόλα λύματα δαιτὸς.

And Ovid at last makes him fasten his own teeth into his own limbs, in order to nourish his own body with his own body

Vix tamen illa mali postquam consumserat omnem  
 Materiam.  
 Ipse suos artus lacerò divellere morsu  
 Coepit ; et infelix minuendo corpus aiebat.

The only reason why the hateful harpies are made so stinking and so uncleanly is that the hunger which is caused by their carrying off the food may be the more terrible. Listen to the complaint of Phineas in Apollonius<sup>12</sup>

Τυτθὸν δ' ἦν ἄρα δήποτ' ἔδητύος ἄμμι λίπωσι,  
 Πνεῖ τόδε μυδαλέον τε καὶ οὐ τλητὸν μένος ὀδμῆς.  
 Οὐδέ τίς οὐδὲ μίνυνθα βροτῶν ἄνσχοιτο πελάσσας,  
 Οὐδ' εἴ οἱ ἀδάμαντος ἐληλαμένον κέαρ εἴη.  
 Ἀλλὰ με πικρὴ δῆτ' αἰ δαιτὶς ἐπίσχει ἀνάγκη  
 Μίμνειν, καὶ μίμνοντα κακῇ ἐν γαστέρι θέσθαι.

I should be very glad to defend from this point of view the disgusting introduction of the harpies by Virgil; but there is no real present hunger which they cause, but only an approaching hunger which they predict; and then, moreover, the whole prophecy resolves itself into a play upon words. Even Dante not only prepares us for the history of the starvation of Ugolino<sup>13</sup> by the very disgusting and ghastly condition in which he places him with his former persecutor in hell; but the starvation itself is not without traits of disgust, which press themselves specially upon our attention, when the sons offer themselves as food to their father. In a note I will cite a passage from a play of Beaumont and Fletcher<sup>14</sup>, which, if we were not obliged to consider it as exaggerated, might take the place of all other examples.

I now approach to the consideration of disgusting objects in painting. Even if it were indisputable that there are, properly speaking, no disgusting objects in relation to sight, the very nature of which indicates that they cannot be within the province of painting considered as a fine art,—even then it would be necessary to avoid objects which are generally disgusting because the association of ideas makes them disgusting to the sight.

Pordenone, in a picture of the sepulture of Christ, represents a spectator holding his nose. Richardson<sup>15</sup> is displeased with this, because Christ had not been dead long enough to allow his corpse to suffer corruption. At the resurrection of Lazarus, on the contrary, he thinks it is permitted to the painter to represent one of the bystanders doing this act,

because the history expressly says that his body already stank. To me this representation appears unendurable, for not only the actual stench, but even the idea of stench, awakens disgust. We fly from stinking places even when we have a cold. But Painting, it will be said, does not choose the disgusting for the sake of what is disgusting; she chooses it, as Poetry does, in order to strengthen the ridiculous and the terrible. Let her do it at her own peril! The remarks which I have already made on this subject as to the ugly apply still more closely to the disgusting. That loses much less of its effect in a representation addressed to the eye than in one addressed to the ear. It cannot in the former become so closely intermingled with the ridiculous and the terrible as in the latter; as soon as the surprise is over, as soon as the first eager glance is satisfied, it becomes separated altogether, and remains in its own original repulsive form.

## CHAPTER XXVI

THE history of Art by Herr Winkelmann has appeared : I will not venture a step further without having read this work. To reason upon general ideas about Art may mislead one into whims, which, sooner or later, may be found refuted by works of Art. The ancients, as well as we, were aware of the ties which knit Painting and Poetry<sup>1</sup> together, and they would not have drawn them tighter than was suitable for each. The achievements of their artists shall instruct me as to what artists speaking generally should do : and when such a man as Winkelmann lifts up the torch of history, speculation may follow him with confidence<sup>2</sup>.

We are accustomed to turn over the leaves of a work of importance before we set to work to read it through steadily. My curiosity was to ascertain before anything else the author's opinion about Laocoon ; not indeed so much with respect to the merit of the work, upon that he had elsewhere already expressed his opinion, as with respect to the date of it. To which party will he adhere ? To that which thinks that Virgil had the group before his eyes ? or to that which holds that the artist worked on the model of the poet ?

The author is entirely silent on the question of reciprocal imitation, and this is quite in accordance with my taste. Where is the absolute necessity for it ? It is not at all impossible that the points of resemblance, which I have been bringing under consideration between the poetical picture and the work of art are only accidental and not intended : and that so little has the one been the model of the other that they do not even appear to have once

made use of the same model. If indeed Winkelmann had been dazzled by an appearance of imitation, he would have pronounced in favour of the work of the artist having been the model to the poet. For he is of opinion that Laocoon belongs to the period when the art of the Greeks had reached its highest pinnacle : the period of Alexander the Great<sup>3</sup>.

A benevolent destiny, he says, which watches over the arts even at the period of their destruction, has preserved to us for the admiration of all ages a work of art of this epoch, as a proof of the truth with which history records the glory of so many masterpieces now lost to us. Laocoon with his two sons, the joint composition of Agesander, Apollodorus<sup>4</sup>, and Athenodorus of Rhodes, belongs, according to all probability, to this epoch, although it may not be possible to specify, as some have done, the Olympiad in which this artist flourished.

And then he adds in a note

Pliny does not say one word as to the time in which Agesander and his fellow-workmen lived ; Maffei, however, in his explanatory remarks on the ancient statues, has chosen to be convinced that this artist flourished in the eighty-eighth Olympiad, and his authority others, like Richardson, have followed. I think Maffei has mistaken an Athenodorus, one of the scholars of Polyclethus ; and as Polyclethus flourished in the eighty-seventh Olympiad, has placed his supposed scholar in a later Olympiad : Maffei has no other grounds for his opinion.

He can certainly have no other grounds. But why does Herr Winkelmann content himself with merely exposing the error of Maffei ? Does it refute itself ? Not entirely. For although it is not supported by any other grounds, still it has in itself a slight probability, unless we can prove that Athenodorus, the scholar of Polyclethus, and Athenodorus, the assistant of Agesander and Polydorus, could not possibly be one and the same person. Fortunately

this can be proved, and, moreover, that they did not belong to the same country. The first Athenodorus was, according to the express testimony of Pausanias<sup>b</sup>, of Clitor in Arcadia. The other, according to the testimony of Pliny, was born at Rhodes. Herr Winkelmann could not have intended to abstain from refuting incontestably the mistake of Maffei, and for that reason not have brought forward this circumstance. Rather must the reasons which he deduces from the art of the work, and which he founds upon an indisputable knowledge, have appeared to him so important that he did not trouble himself with considering whether the opinion of Maffei has or has not any appearance of probability. He doubtless recognises in the Laocoon so many of those *argutiae* which are characteristic of Lysippus<sup>c</sup>, and with which this master first enriched the art, as to render it impossible that this could have been a work anterior to his time.

But when it is demonstrated that the Laocoon cannot be older than Lysippus, is it thereby demonstrated that the Laocoon must belong to about the time of this sculptor? that it cannot possibly be of a much later date? I pass over the periods in which, up to the beginning of the Roman monarchy, Art in Greece at one time lifted up, at another hung down, her head: but why might not the Laocoon have been the happy fruit of competition amongst the artists which the extravagant splendour of the first Caesars kindled into life? Why could not Agesander and his fellow-workmen have been the contemporaries of a Strongylion, an Arcesilaus, a Pasiteles, a Posidonius, a Diogenes? Would not the works of even these masters be equally prized with the best which Art ever produced? And if undoubted works of Art by them were in our possession, but the age of the authors was unknown, and could only be inferred from their art, what a divine inspiration must have been necessary to prevent the critic from believing that they belonged to that



period which Herr Winkelmann considers to have been alone worthy to produce the Laocoon!

It is true Pliny does not expressly mark the time in which the artists of the Laocoon lived. But if I was obliged to draw a conclusion from the whole tenor of the passage whether he intended to place them among the old or the new artists; I confess that it appears to me that the latter opinion has the greater probability. Let any man judge.

After Pliny had spoken in some detail of the most ancient and greatest masters of sculpture, of Phidias, of Praxiteles, of Scopas, and afterwards had named, without any chronological order, the rest, especially those of whose works there were some traces existing in Rome: he continues as follows

*Nec multo plurium fama est\*, quorundam claritati in operibus eximius obstante numero artificum, quoniam nec unus occupat gloriam, nec plures pariter nuncupari possunt, sicut in Laocoonte qui est in Titi Imperatoris domo, opus omnibus et picturae et statuariae artis praeferendum. Ex uno lapide cum et liberos draconumque mirabiles nexus de consilii sententiâ fecere summi artifices Agesander et Polydorus et Athenodorus Rhodii. Similiter Palatinas domus Caesarum replevere probatissimis signis Craterus cum Pythodoro, Polydeutes cum Hermolao, Pythodorus alius cum Artemone, et singularis Aphrodisius Trallianus. Agrippae Pantheum decoravit Diogenes Atheniensis, et Caryatides in columnis templi ejus probantur inter pauca operum: sicut in fastigio posita signa, sed propter altitudinem loci minus celebrata<sup>7</sup>*

Of all the artists mentioned in this passage Diogenes of Athens is the one the period of whose existence is the most certainly known. He adorned the Pantheon of Agrippa. He therefore lived in the time of Augustus. But let us weigh the words of Pliny more carefully, and we shall, I think, find that they fix also as incontestably the age of Crate-

\* This is incorrectly cited by Lessing, it should be 'Deinde multorum obscurior, etc.' R. P.

rus and Pythodorus, of Polydectes and Hermolaus, of the second Pythodorus and Artemon, as well as of Aphrodisius Trallianus. He says of them: 'Palatinas Domus Caesarum replevere probatissimis signis'. I ask, can this mean only that the palaces of the Caesars were filled with their excellent works? Meaning, for instance, that the Caesars had caused collections of them to be everywhere made in order that they should be transported into their dwellings at Rome? Certainly not. The meaning must be that these artists executed their works expressly for these palaces of the Caesars, and therefore that they lived in the times of these Caesars.

That there were later artists who worked only in Italy may be concluded from the fact that there is no mention of their having worked elsewhere. If they had worked in earlier times in Greece, Pausanias would certainly have seen some one or other of their works and would have transmitted to us some memorial of them. He does indeed mention a Pythodorus, but Hardouin<sup>8</sup> is quite wrong in considering him to be the Pythodorus mentioned in the passage of Pliny. For Pausanias speaks of the statue of Juno which he saw at Coronea in Boeotia, as the work of an early master, *ἄγαλμα ἀρχαῖον*, which expression he only applies to the works of those masters who had lived in the most primitive and rudest times of the art, long before Phidias and Praxiteles. And with the works of such an art the Emperors would certainly not have decorated their palaces. Still less value is to be ascribed to the other suggestion of Hardouin, that the Artemon mentioned is perhaps a painter of the same name of whom Pliny speaks in another passage. A conformity of names furnishes only a very slender probability, which is far from authorising us to do violence to the natural interpretation of an uncorrupted passage. But it is not to be doubted that Craterus, and Pythodorus, and Polydectes, and

Hermolaus, with the rest, lived in the times of the Emperors whose palaces they filled with their excellent works. Still it appears to me that we can assign no other epoch to those artists whom Pliny mentions before them, and from whom he passes to them with a *Similiter*.

And these were the master-artists of the Laocoon : for let us only reflect if Agesander, Polydorus, and Athenodorus were such ancient masters as Herr Winkelmann considers them to be ; how clumsy it would be in a writer, to whom precision or expression is no slight thing, if he must at once skip from them to the most modern masters, to make this spring with a simple *Similiter*.

But it will be objected that this *Similiter* does not relate to a resemblance in respect to epoch, but to another circumstance which these masters, so dissimilar in relation of time, have in common with each other. Pliny speaks of artists who worked in a community, and who, on account of this community, were less known than they deserved to be. For since no one of them could alone claim the honour of the common work, and yet it would be too long and tedious to mention every time all those who had taken part in it ('quoniam nec unus occupat gloriam, nec plures pariter nuncupari possunt'), so it came to pass that their names, collectively, were neglected. This has been the misfortune of the master-artists of the Laocoon and of so many other artists whom the Emperors employed in the decoration of their palaces.

I agree to this. But even then it is also most probable that Pliny intended to speak only of the modern artists who worked in a community. For if he had intended to speak of the ancient artists, why has he only mentioned the artists of the Laocoon ? Why not others also ? An Onatas and a Kalliteles, a Timocles and a Timarchides, or the sons of this Timarchides, by whose common labour there was a Jupiter executed in Rome<sup>9</sup>. Herr

Winkelman himself says that we might make a long catalogue of similar ancient works which had been the offspring of more than one father<sup>10</sup>; and would Pliny have remembered only the individual Agesander, Polydorus, and Athenodorus if he had not wished to confine himself expressly to the most modern times?

Moreover, if a conjecture becomes the more probable as it tends to clear up the greater number of difficulties, then that conjecture which supposes the artist of the Laocoon to have flourished under the first Caesars, certainly deserves to obtain a very high rank. For if they had worked in Greece at the period which Herr Winkelman assigns to them; if the Laocoon itself had originally been executed in Greece, the deep silence which the Greeks observed with respect to such a work ('opere omnibus et picturae et statuariae artis praeponendo') is extremely strange. It is also extremely strange if such great masters had done no other work, or if Pausanias has entirely overlooked these other works throughout the whole of Greece, as he did the Laocoon. In Rome, on the other hand, the greatest masterpiece might long have remained concealed, and if Laocoon had been finished in the reign of Augustus, it would nevertheless not be wonderful that Pliny had been the first and the last who mentioned it. For let us only remember what Scopas said of a Venus which stood in the temple of Mars at Rome

Quemcunque alium locum nobilitatura. Romae quidem magnitudo operum eam obliterat, ac magni officiorum negotiorumque acervi omnes à contemplatione talium abducunt, quoniam otiosorum et in magno loci silentio apta admiratio talis est<sup>11</sup>

Those who see in the Laocoon group an imitation of Virgil's Laocoon will seize upon what I have said with pleasure. Moreover, a conjecture occurs to me which at the same time they will not much dis-

like. May it not be supposed that it was Asinius Pollio who introduced, by means of Greek artists, the Laocoon of Virgil? Pollio was a particular friend of the Poet, survived the Poet, and appears to have written a work of his own upon the Aeneid. For where otherwise than in a work of his own upon the Aeneid could those observations have appeared which Servius ascribes to him?<sup>12</sup> Moreover, Pollio was a lover and critic of Art, possessed a rich collection of the best ancient works of Art, caused new ones to be executed by artists of his time, and so bold an achievement as the Laocoon was altogether, if we may judge from his collection, in harmony with his taste. *Ut fuit acris vehementiae, sic quaeque spectari monumenta sui voluit*<sup>13</sup>.

Nevertheless, as, in the time of Pliny, when the Laocoon stood in the Palace of Titus, the cabinet of Pollio, with its whole collection still entire, appears to have been in a place apart; this conjecture must, on the other hand, lose some of its probability. And why should not Titus himself have done what we wish to ascribe to Pollio?

## CHAPTER XXVII

My opinion that the artists of Laocoon, who worked under the first Caesars at least, could not have been so old as Herr Winkelmann states, is strengthened by a little discovery which he himself first made. It is the following<sup>1</sup>

At Nethuno, formerly Antium, the Cardinal Alexander Albani discovered in a great vault, which lay sunk in the sea, a Vase of dark grey marble, which is now called *Bigio*, to which a figure had been attached, on which was found the following inscription

ἈΘΑΝΟΔΩΡΟΣ ἈΓΗΣΑΝΔΡΟΥ  
ΠΟΔΙΟΣ ἔΠΟΙΗΣΕ.

*Athanodorus, the son of Agesander of Rhodes, made it.* We learn from this inscription that father and son worked at the Laocoon, and presumably Apollodorus (Polydorus) was the son of Agesander

for this Athanodorus can be no other than the one mentioned by Pliny. This inscription also proves that more works of Art were found than the three mentioned by Pliny upon which the artists had placed the word *done*, in the fullest sense of the past tense, namely, *ἐποίησε, fecit*. He maintains that the other artists out of modesty made use of the imperfect tense, *ἐποίει, faciebat*.

Herr Winkelmann will find little opposition to his assertion that the Athanodorus in this inscription could be no other than the Athenodorus whom Pliny mentions among the master-artists of the Laocoon. Athanodorus and Athenodorus are one and the same, for the Rhodians made use of the Doric dialect. But upon the conclusions which he would

draw from this fact I must make a few observations. The first conclusion, namely, that Athenodorus was the son of Agesander may be legitimate. It is very probable, but not incontestable. For it is known that there were ancient artists who, instead of naming themselves after their father, preferred to name themselves after their master. What Pliny says of the two brothers Apollonius and Tauriscus admits of no other explanation.<sup>2</sup> But how is this? Shall this inscription contradict at the same time the assertion of Pliny that not more than three works of art are to be found upon which master-artists would have put their names in the past tense [by ἐποίησε, instead of ἐποίη]? This inscription? Why must we first learn from this inscription what we might have well learnt from many others? Have we not already found upon the statue of Germanicus Κλεομένης—ἐποίησε, upon the so-called deification of Homer, Ἀρχέλαος ἐποίησε, upon the well-known vase at Gaeta, Σαλπίων ἐποίησε?<sup>3</sup>

Herr Winkelmann may say 'Who knows this, better than I?'. But he must add, so much the worse for Pliny, his 'assertion is the oftener contradicted, and the more certainly gainsayed'.

Not quite so. For how would it be, if Herr Winkelmann has made Pliny say more than he really intended to say? If the examples which he puts forward do not contradict the assertion of Pliny, but merely the addition which Herr Winkelmann has introduced into the assertion? Such is really the case. I must set forth the whole passage. Pliny, in his dedication to Titus\*, wishes to speak of his work with the modesty of a man who himself best knows how far it falls short of perfection. He finds a remarkable instance of such a modesty in the case of the Greeks, upon the boasting much-promising titles of whose books [*inscriptiones propter quos vadium deferi possit*] he dwells awhile, and says<sup>4</sup>

\* It is, 'Vespasiano suo'. R. P.

Et ne in totum videar Graecos insectari, ex illis nos velim intelligi pingendi fingendique conditoribus, quos in libellis his invenies, absoluta opera, et illa quoque quae mirando non satiamur, pendenti titulo inscripsisse : UT APELLES FACIEBAT, aut POLYCLETUS : tanquam inchoata semper arte et imperfecta, ut contra judiciorum varietates superesset artifici regressus ad veniam, velut emendaturo quicquid desiderent, si non esset interceptus. Quare plenum verecundiae illud est, quod omnia opera tanquam novissima inscribere, et tanquam singulis fato adempti. Tria non amplius, ut opinor, absolute traduntur inscripta, ILLE FECIT, quae suis locis reddam : quo apparuit, summam artis securitatem auctori placuisse, et ob id magna invidia fuere omnia ea.

I desire to draw attention to the words of Pliny, *pingendi fingendique conditoribus*. Pliny does not say that there has been a general custom for artists to use the imperfect tense in writing their name upon a work ; that it was a custom observed by all artists at all times. He says expressly that only the first ancient master-artists, those creators of the arts of design, *pingendi fingendique conditores*, an Apelles, a Polycletus, and their contemporaries, possessed this wise modesty ; and by mentioning these only, he silently, but pointedly, gives us to understand, that their followers, especially in later times, expressed themselves with more confidence.

Proceeding upon this supposition, as indeed we must, we can allow the discovered inscription of one of the three artists of Laocoon to have full authenticity ; and yet it may be true that, as Pliny says, there have been only three works forthcoming, in the inscriptions upon which their authors have used the past tense ; namely, among the old artists of the times of Apelles, Polycletus, Nicias, Lysippus. But that cannot justify the position that Athenodorus and his assistants were contemporaries of Apelles and Lysippus, according to the allegation of Herr Winkelmann. Rather we must conclude as follows :—That if it be true that amongst the



works of the old artists, of an Apelles, a Polycletes, and of the rest of this class, there have been only three who have used the past tense in their inscriptions : if it be true that Pliny has himself named these three<sup>6</sup>, then Athenodorus, to whom none of the three works belong, and who, notwithstanding, makes use of the past tense, does not belong to those old artists ; he can be no contemporary of Apelles, or of Lysippus, but must be placed in later times.

In one word, I believe that it may be taken for a very certain criterion that all artists who make use of *ἐποίησε* have flourished long after the time of Alexander the Great, in a word, either before or during the time of the Caesars. With respect to Cleomenes it is certain ; as to Archelaus it is very probable ; as to Salpion, the contrary at least cannot be demonstrated ; and so as to the rest, not excluding Athenodorus.

Herr Winkelmann shall be judge himself ! But I protest by anticipation against the converse proposition. If all artists who have used *ἐποίησε* belong to the later epoch, it does not follow that all who have used *ἐποίησε* belong to the earlier period. There may have been among the later artists some who have really been endowed with the modesty so well becoming a great man, and there may be others who have pretended to possess it.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

AFTER the Laocoon, I was most curious to learn what Herr Winkelmann would say of the so-called Borghese gladiator. I believed that I had made a discovery with respect to this statue, of which I thought as much as one usually does of such discoveries.

I was only afraid that Herr Winkelmann would have anticipated me. But I find nothing of the kind in his observations; and if any one thing more than another could make me distrust myself, it would be that very thing, that my apprehension was not fulfilled.

Some, says Herr Winkelmann<sup>1</sup>, make a discobolus of this statue, that is, a man who throws a discus or a quoit of metal; and this was the opinion of the celebrated Herr von Stosch, in a letter written to me, but without sufficient consideration of the attitude in which such a figure should be placed. For he who is about to throw anything must draw his body backwards, and at the moment when the throw should take place, the weight lies upon the thigh on the same side, and the left leg is at rest: here, however, it is the contrary. The whole figure is thrown forwards, and rests upon the left thigh, and the right leg is behind, stretched to the uttermost. The right arm is modern, and they have put a piece of a lance in his hand; on the left arm you see the strap of a shield which he has holden. You observe that the head and the eyes are directed upwards, and that the figure appears to be defending itself with a shield from something coming from above, which makes it more probably the attitude of a soldier who has distinguished himself in a situation of danger. No statue in Greece was, it may be presumed, ever erected in honour of a gladiator; and this work appears to be older than the introduction of gladiators among the Greeks.

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A better judgment cannot be given. This statue is no more a gladiator than a discobolus ; it is really the representation of a warrior, who has placed himself in this attitude on an occasion of peril. And as Herr Winkelmann had so happily discovered this, how could he stop here? How came it not to occur to him that it represented a warrior who in this very attitude had prevented the entire destruction of an army, and to whom his grateful country had erected a statue in this very attitude?

In a word, the statue is Chabrias.

The proof is to be found in the following paper in *Nepos*, in the life of this general<sup>2</sup>

Hic quoque in summis habitus est duobus, resque multas memoria dignas gessit. Sed ex his elucet maxime inventum ejus in proelio, quod apud Thebas fecit, cum Boeotiis subsidio venisset. Namque in ea victoria fidente summo duce Agesilao, fugatis jam ab eo conductitiis catervis, reliquam phalangem loci vetuit cedere; obnixoque genu scuto, projectaque hasta, impetum excipere hostium docuit. Id novum Agesilaus intuens, progredi non est ausus, suosque jam incurrentes tuba revocavit. Hoc usque eo in Graecia fama celebratum est, ut illo statu Chabrias sibi statuam fieri voluerit, quae publice ei ab Atheniensibus in foro constituta est. Ex quo factum est, ut postea athletae, ceterique artifices his statibus in statu is ponendis uterentur in quibus victoriam essent adepti<sup>3</sup>

I know that readers will stand aloof for a moment before they express their assent ; but I hope for a moment only. The attitude of Chabrias does not appear to be precisely the same which we see in the Borghese statue. The darted lance, *projecta hasta*, is common to both, but the *obnixo genu scuto* is explained by commentators by *obnixo in scutum obfirmato genu ad scutum*. Chabrias taught his soldiers how to bend the knee, protected by the shield, and behind it to await the enemy: the statue, on the contrary, holds the shield on high. But suppose the commentators are mistaken? And

if the words *obnixo genu scuto* do not go together, and we ought to read *obnixo genu* by itself, and *scuto* by itself, or together with what follows *projectâque hastâ*? Only make a single comma, and the resemblance is as perfect as possible. The statue is a soldier *qui obnixo genu, scuto projectâque hastâ impetum hostis excipit*: it shows what Chabrias did, and is the statue of Chabrias. That the comma is really wanted is proved by the *projectâ* and connected *que*, which, if *obnixo genu scuto* were taken together, would be superfluous, and on this account it is actually omitted in some editions.

The form of the letters of the inscription of the master-artist agrees perfectly with the high antiquity to which this statue would then belong; and Herr Winkelmann himself has from this concluded that it is one of the oldest of the present statues in Rome on which the name of the artist is written. I leave to his penetrating glance to decide whether, having regard to the principles of Art, he has remarked anything in the statue which conflicts with my opinion. If I obtain his assent, I may flatter myself to have given a better example, how happily the classical writers are illustrated by these ancient works of Art, and how these latter in their turn throw light upon the former, than is to be found in the whole folio of Spence.

## CHAPTER XXIX

HERR WINKELMANN, bringing immense stores of reading, and the finest and most various knowledge of Art to his work, has laboured with the noble confidence of the ancient artists, who applied all their industry to the principal matters, and with respect to accessories, either treated them with an apparently studied neglect, or delivered them over entirely to the first hand which happened to present itself.

It is no slight praise to have only committed such faults as any one could have avoided. They are apparent on the first cursory reading, and if they are to be remarked upon at all, it is only for the purpose of reminding certain people, who think they only have eyes, that such faults do not deserve observation.

In his writings on the imitation of Greek works of art Herr Winkelmann has already in some points been misled by Junius. Junius is a very dangerous author; his whole work is a Cento; and as he always will speak with the words of the ancients, he not unfrequently applies passages in them to painting which in the originals treat of anything rather than painting. If, for example, Herr Winkelmann wishes to teach us that we can as little attain by the mere imitation of nature to the highest point in art as we can in poetry, that the poet as well as the painter must rather choose the Impossible, which is probable, than the merely Possible; he adds to this proposition: 'Possibility and Truth, which Longinus demands from a painter, in opposition to the Incredible of the poet, may very well consist with this position'. This additional

remark had much better not have been made; for he shows us the two greatest critics in a state of contradiction, which is wholly without foundation. It is untrue that Longinus has ever said this. He said something like it about Eloquence and Poetry, but nothing of the sort about Poetry and Painting: 'Ὡς δ' ἕτερόν τι ἢ ῥητορικὴ φαντασία βούλεται, καὶ ἕτερον ἢ παρὰ ποιηταῖς, οὐκ ἂν λάθοι σε (he writes to his Terentian<sup>1</sup>) οὐδ' ὅτι τῆς μὲν ἐν ποιήσει τέλος ἐστὶν ἐκπληξίς, τῆς δ' ἐν λόγοις ἐνάργεια. And again: Οὐ μὴν ἄγγα τὰ μὲν παρὰ τοῖς ποιηταῖς μυθικώτεραν ἔχει τὴν ὑπερέκπτασιν' ὥς ἔφην καὶ πάντῃ τὸν πιστὸν ὑπεραίρουσαν' τῆς δὲ ῥητορικῆς φαντασίας κάλλιστον ἀεὶ τὸ ἐμπρακτον καὶ ἐναλῆθες. Only Junius substitutes in this place Painting for Eloquence: and it is in Junius and not in Longinus that Herr Winkelmann has read<sup>2</sup>: 'Praesertim cum Poeticae phantasiae finis sit ἐκπληξίς, Pictoriae vero, ἐνάργεια. Καὶ τὰ μὲν παρὰ τοῖς ποιηταῖς, ut loquitur idem Longinus'. Yes, the words of Longinus, but not the sense of Longinus!

The same observation applies to this passage: 'All actions', he says, 'and attitudes of Greek figures which are not impressed with the character of wisdom, but are too passionate and wild, are obnoxious to that fault which the ancient artists called Parenthyrsus'<sup>3</sup>. The ancient artists? for this position Junius is the only authority. For Parenthyrsus was a rhetorical word of art, and perhaps, as the passage in Longinus appears to inform us, is only made use of by Theodorus<sup>4</sup>: Τούτῳ παράκειται τρίτον τι κακίας εἶδος ἐν τοῖς παθητικοῖς, ὑπὲρ ὃ Θεόδωρος παρένθυρσον ἐκάλει. Ἔστι δὲ πάθος ἄκαιρον καὶ κενὸν, ἐνθα μὴ δεῖ πάθους' ἢ ἀμετρον, ἔνθα μετρίον δεῖ. Yes, I very much doubt if this word can generally be applied to poetry. For in eloquence and poetry there is a pathos which can be carried to as high a degree as possible without becoming a parenthyrsus, and it is only the highest pathos in the most unsuitable place which is a Parenthyrsus. But in painting the highest pathos would always be Parenthyrsus,

even when it may be well excused by the situation of the person whom it represents. It is probable that various inaccuracies to be found in his *History of Art* originate entirely in the fact that Herr Winkelmann, in his haste, was minded to consult Junius rather than the original sources themselves. For example, when he wishes to show by instances that the Greeks especially esteemed whatever was excellent in any art or work, and that the best workman in the slightest thing could obtain immortality for his name; he cites, among other examples, the following<sup>6</sup>: 'We know the name of the workman who made the balances of the most accurate kind, he was called Parthenius'. Herr Winkelmann must have read the words of Juvenal, which he invokes on this occasion, *Lances Parthenio factas*, only in the catalogue of Junius.

For if he had looked at Juvenal himself he would never have been led astray by the ambiguity of the word *Lanx*, but would have learnt from the context that the poet was not speaking of scales or balances, but of plates and dishes. Juvenal praises Catullus for having imitated, in a dreadful storm at sea, the act of the beaver, which bites off its secret parts in order to save its life; and in like manner he caused his most precious effects to be thrown into the sea, in order that he himself might not perish with his ship. He describes these precious effects, and says, amongst other things

Ille nec argentum dubitabat mit.     lances  
 Parthenio factas, urnae cratera ca     tem  
 Et dignum sitiēte Pholo, vel cony     e Fuscī.  
 Adde et bascaudas et mille escaria,     ultum  
 Caelati, biberet quo callidus emptor     lynti 6

*Lances*, which are here placed amo. 3rd cups and jugs, what else can they be but plates and dishes? And what else did Juvenal mean than that Catullus ordered to be thrown into the sea his whole silver dinner-service, which also contained plates of the curious workmanship of Parthenius. Parthenius,

says the old scholiast, *caelatoris nomen*. But when Grangæus in his commentaries adds to this name, *sculptor de quo Plinius*, he must have written this down at haphazard, for Pliny mentions no artist of this name. 'Yes', continues Herr Winkelmann, 'the name of the currier, as we should call it, who made the leathern shield of Ajax has come down to us'. But he cannot have taken this fact from the authority to which he refers his reader, from the life of Homer, by Herodotus, for there the lines out of the *Iliad* are cited in which the poet gives the name of Tychius to this worker in leather; but at the same time it is expressly said that there was a worker in leather with whom Homer was acquainted, and towards whom he wished to show his friendship and gratitude by the introduction of his name into his poem<sup>7</sup>: 'Ἀπέδωκε δὲ χάριν καὶ Τυχίῳ τῷ σκύτει, ὃς ἐδέξατο αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ Νέῳ τείχει, προσέλθοντα πρὸς τὸ σκύτειον, ἐν τοῖς ἔπεσι κατὰξεντας ἐν τῇ Ἰλιάδι τοῖσδε·

Ἄλῃς δ' ἐγγύθεν ἦλθε, φέρων σάκος, ἥντε πύργον,  
 Χάλκεον, ἑπταβόειον, ὃ οἱ Τυχίος κάμε τεύχων  
 Σκυτοτόμων ὃχ' ἄριστος, ὅτλη ἐνὶ οἰκίᾳ ναίων<sup>8</sup>

Here is exactly the contrary of what Herr Winkelmann was so certain, the name of the currier who made the shield of Ajax was already in the time of Homer so forgotten that the poet took the liberty of introducing an entirely strange name in lieu of it. There are several other small faults, faults of memory, or which relate to things which he only brings forward as accidental illustrations.

It was Hercules and not Bacchus of whom Parrhasius boasts that he had seen him in the very form in which he painted him<sup>9</sup>. Tauriscus did not come from Rhodes, but from Tralles, in Lydia<sup>10</sup>. *Antigone* is not the first tragedy of Sophocles<sup>11</sup>; but I must restrain myself from placing such trifles as these on a heap.

It is true that no one would think I did so from



a desire of malignant criticism, but those who know my high esteem for Herr Winkelmann might consider it as *crocylegmus* <sup>12</sup>.

N.B.—Here ends the first and only completed part of the Essay on Laocoon, as it was first published ; but after the death of Lessing, among his papers were discovered various notes, *for a second part*, and perhaps *a third part*. They were in a rough state, but contain many valuable and pregnant suggestions. I have translated nearly all, certainly all the most important of them, in the Appendix.

# NOTES

## INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup> The word should be 'the material'; the German word is 'Gegenständen', that is, 'the objects', and Lessing mistook the meaning of "Τλη, which certainly means 'the material'. The mistake, however, in no way affects the reasoning or theory of the writer. R. P.

Plutarch, *Comm. Bellone an Pace clariores fuerint Athenienses*, v. 366, ed. Reiske. R. P.

## CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup> *Von der Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst*, s. 21, 22.

<sup>2</sup> This poem of Sadolet is printed at length in a later part of this essay: but, according to Sadolet, Laocoon—

'... dolore acri et lanlato impulsus acerbo  
'Dat gemitum ingentem'.

It is true he adds a little later—

'Ferre nequit rabiem et de vulnere murmur anhelum est'. R. P.

<sup>3</sup> Pliny makes emphatic mention of him, *Nat. Hist.*, lxxxv—xl. 30: 'Est nomen et Heraclidi Macedoni. Initio naves pinxit: captoque rege Perseo Athenas commigravit: ubi eodem tempore erat *Metrodorus* pictor, idemque philosophus, magnae in utrâque scientiâ auctoritatis'. C. Plinius Secundus, author of the *Historia Naturalis*, born A.D. 23, died A.D. 79. Uncle of C. Plinius Caecilius Secundus, born A.D. 61, the writer of the ten books of *Epistolae*, the time of whose death is doubtful. R. P.

<sup>4</sup> Brumoy, *Théâtre des Grecs*, t. 11, p. 89.

<sup>5</sup> Brumoy, Pierre, a distinguished member of the Society of Jesuits. Of all his works the *Théâtre des Grecs*

won for him the greatest reputation as a scholar. Born 1688, died 1742. R. P.

<sup>6</sup> *Iliad*, E. v. 343, 'Η δὲ μέγα ἰδύουσα.

<sup>7</sup> *Iliad*, E. v. 859.

<sup>8</sup> Th. Bartolinus *de Causis contemplae a Danis adhuc gentilibus Mortis*, cap. i. He was born 1659. Professor of History and Civil Law at Copenhagen; wrote several Latin treatises besides the one referred to. Died 1690. In this work, *de Causis*, Gray found the Norse Ballad from which he took his *Descent of Odin*. R. P.

<sup>9</sup> Lessing perhaps had in his mind the *Philoctetes* which he so often quotes and so justly admired :—

Ἐν πέτροισι πέτρον ἐκτρέβαν μόλις

Ἐφην' ἄφαντον φῶς. *Philoc.* 296. R. P.

<sup>10</sup> *Iliad*, H. 421.

<sup>11</sup> *Odyss.* Δ. 195.

<sup>12</sup> Chateaubrun, Jean-Baptiste Vivier de Chateaubrun; born at Angoulême in 1686; his tragedy of *Mahomet Second* was acted in 1714, and was well received; but he produced no other play till 1754, *Les Troyennes*, which was successful in 1755. Eleven years before the appearance of the *Laocoon*, he produced *Philoctète*, which was acted seven times. He died at the age of 89, in Paris. R. P.

## CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup> Antiochus, *Antholog.* lib. ii, cap. 4. Hardouin on Pliny, lib. xxxv, sect. 36, p. m. 698, ascribes this Epigram to a certain Pison. But among all the Greek epigrammatists there is no one of that name. Hardouin, Jean, a French jesuit of extraordinary erudition, antiquary, chronologist, naturalist, commentator, among other works he was the author of *Chronologic Repliquée par les Médailles*; he was very fond of paradoxes, and in an epitaph composed for him was styled *Hominum paradoxotatos*. Born 1646, died 1729. R. P.

<sup>2</sup> 'Namque subtexi par est minoris pictura celebres in penicillo e quibus fuit Pyreicus: arte paucis proferendus:

proposito nescio an destruxerit se: quoniam humilia quidem secutus humilitatis summani adeptus est gloriam. Tonstrinas sutrinisque pinxit et asellos et opsonia ac similia: ob hoc cognominatur Rhyparographos, in iis consummatae voluptatis. Quippe ea pluris veniere quam maximae multorum', Plin., *Hist. Nat.*, xxxv, cap. x. R. P.

<sup>3</sup> Therefore pictures, according to Aristotle's Precept, should not be shown to young persons, in order to keep their imagination, as much as possible, pure from all pictures of what is ugly. (*Pol.*, I, viii, c. 5.) Herr Boden wished to read Pausanias' instead of Pauson, because it was known that the former had painted unchaste pictures (*De Umbra Poetica*, Comm. I, xiii.), as if one had first to learn from this philosophical legislator that youth should be removed from such lascivious provocations. He had only to compare the well-known passage in the *Poetics* (cap. ii.) in order to withdraw his conjecture. There are commentators (e. g. Kühn, upon Aelian Var., *Hist.*, I, iv, c. 3), who think that the distinction which Aristotle makes between Polygnotus, Dionysius, and Pauson was founded on this supposed fact that Polygnotus painted gods and heroes, Dionysius men, and Pauson animals. They all painted the human figure, and that Pauson once painted a horse does not prove that he was a painter of animals as Herr Boden imagines. The degrees of the beautiful which they gave to their human figures decided their work, and it was solely on this account that Dionysius only painted men, and obtained before all others the appellation of 'the man painter', because he was too servile a follower of nature, and never could raise himself to that ideal, below which to have painted gods and heroes would have been an offence against religion. The passage in the *Poetics* of Aristotle, 2, § 2, is *ὡς περ οἱ γραφεῖς* Πολύγνωτος μὲν γὰρ κρείττους, Πάυσων δὲ χείρους, Διονύσιος δὲ ὁμοίους. R. P.

<sup>4</sup> Aristoph., *Plut.*, 602; *Acharn.*, 854.

<sup>5</sup> Plinius, I. xxx, s. 37.

<sup>6</sup> *De Picturâ Vet.*, I. 2, c. 4, § 1. See preface for some account of Junius. R. P.

<sup>7</sup> I venture to doubt whether this word has been under-

stood. The explanation is as follows: Count Ghezzi (Pietro Leone) was, as his father and grandfather had been, a painter and engraver of the Roman School; taught by his father (Giuseppe), who died at Rome 1721, and who was the son of another Ghezzi (Sebastiano). P. L. Ghezzi excelled in caricature; he is said to have composed no less than 400, of cardinals, princes, ambassadors, and remarkable persons. He was born in 1674; died in 1755, at Rome. R. P.

<sup>8</sup> Plin., *Hist. Nat.*, xxxiv, s. 4: 'Olympica: ubi omnium qui vicissent statuas dicari mos erat, eorum vero qui ter ibi superavissent ex membris ipsorum similitudine expressa quas *iconicas* vocant'. R. P.

<sup>9</sup> It is a mistake to consider a serpent as the sign of a medical Deity only; Justinus Martyr (*Apolog.*, ii, 55, ed. Sylburg) says expressly, *παρὰ παντὶ τῶν νομιζομένων παρ' ὑμῖν θεῶν, ὅφισ σύμβολον μέγα καὶ μυστήριον ἀναγράφεται*; and it would be easy to produce an array of monumental records in which snakes accompany Deities which have not the least relation to health.

'All the different Arts which I have hitherto mentioned as taking their rise from the imagination, have this in common, that their primary object is to please', D. Stewart, *Phil. of Human Mind*, i, 366. 'Pleasure is the end of his (the poet's) art, and the more numerous the sources of it which he can open the greater will be the effect produced by the efforts of his genius', *Ib.*, 367. R. P.

<sup>10</sup> Let any one go through all the works of Art which Pliny, Pausanias, and others mention; let him survey the ancient statues, bassi-relievi, and pictures at present known to us, and no Fury will be found, I speak of those figures which belong rather to Allegory than to Art, such as we find especially on coins. Therefore, Spence, who must have Furies, would rather borrow them from coins. (*Sequini Numism.*, p. 178. Spanheim de Praeft, *Numism. Dissert.*, xiii, p. 639. *Les Césars de Julien*, par Spanheim, p. 48.) These introduce them by an intellectual feat into a work in which they certainly are not. He says, in *Polymetis* (Dial., xvi, p. 272):

Tho' Furies are very uncommon in the works of the ancient artists, yet there is one subject in which they are generally introduced by

them. What I mean is the death of Meleager; in the relief of which they are often represented as encouraging or urging Althaea to burn the fatal brand; on which the life of her only son depended. Even a woman's resentment you see could not go so far, without a little help of the devil. In a copy of one of these reliefs published in the *Admiranda*, there are two women standing by the altar with Althaea; who are probably meant for Furies in the original; (for who but Furies would assist at such a sacrifice?) tho' the copy scarce represents them horrid enough for that character: but what is most to be observed in that piece is a round, or medallion about the midst of it, with the evident head of a Fury upon it. This might be what Althaea addressed her prayers to, whenever she wished ill to her neighbours; or whenever she was going to do any very evil action: Ovid introduces her as invoking the Furies on this occasion in particular and makes her give more than one reason for her doing so.

By such devices one can make anything out of anything. 'Who', says Spence, 'but Furies could have assisted at such an action?'. I answer, the maid-servant of Althaea who kindled the fire must keep it up. Ovid says (*Metam.*, viii, 460, 461),

Protulit hunc (stipitem) taedasque in fragmina poni  
Imperat et positis inimicos admovet ignes.

Dryden's translation, as given in Garth's *Ovid*, is:

This brand she now produced; and first she strows  
The hearth with heaps of chips, and after blows.

The *taedae* of this kind, long pieces of resinous wood, which the ancients used for torches, were actually carried by two persons in their hands, and one of them, as is clear from the attitude, had broken a piece off. On the boss, in the middle of the work, I do not at all recognise a Fury. Without doubt it must be the head of Meleager (*Metam.*, viii, 515).

Inscius atque absens flamma Meleagros ab illa  
Uritur: et caecis torreris viscera sentit  
Ignibus: et magnos superat virtute dolores.

Just then the hero cast a doleful cry,  
And in those absent flames began to fry;  
The blind contagion raged within his veins,  
But he with manly patience bore his pains.

The artist makes use of him as if to help the transition into the following Epoch of the same history which exhibits the dying Meleager in close proximity to it. What Spence calls the Furies Montfaucon calls the Fates (*Antiq. Expl.*, t. 1, p. 162), excepting the head on the boss which he also considers to be a Fury. Bellori himself

(Admirand, tab. 77) leaves it undecided whether they are Furies or Parcae. This 'or' suffices to show that they are neither the one nor the other. The remaining part of even Montfaucon's explanation is deficient in accuracy. The woman who leans upon her elbows near the bed, he should have called Cassandra and not Atalanta. Atalanta is the figure, which, with her back turned to the bed, sits in an attitude of sorrow. The artist has, with much intelligence, turned her away from the family, because she was only the beloved one, and not the wife of Meleager, and her distress over a misfortune, of which she has been the innocent cause, must exasperate the relations.

<sup>11</sup> Plinius, l. xxxv, s. 10: 'Cum moestos pinxisset omnes, praecipue patrum et tristitiae omnem imaginem consumpsisset, patris ipsius vultum velavit, quem digne non poterat ostendere'.

<sup>12</sup> 'Summi maeroris acerbitatem arte exprimi non posse confessus est', Valerius Maximus, l. viii, c. 11.

<sup>13</sup> The words from which the picture is supposed to be taken are these: *Agamemnon saw Iphigenia advance towards the fatal altar, he groaned, he turned aside his head, he shed tears, and covered his face with his robe.*

Falconet does not at all acquiesce in the praise that is bestowed on Timanthes; not only because it is not his invention, but because he thinks meanly of this trick of concealing, except in instances of blood, where the objects would be too horrible to be seen; 'but', says he, 'in an afflicted father, in a thing, in Agamemnon, you, who are a painter, conceal from me the most interesting circumstance, and then put me off with sophistry and a veil. You are' (he adds) 'a feeble painter, without resource; you do not know even those of your art. I care not what veil it is, whether closed hands, arms raised, or any other action that conceals from me the countenance of the hero. You think of veiling Agamemnon; you have unveiled your own ignorance. A painter who represents Agamemnon veiled is as ridiculous as a poet would be, who, in a pathetic situation, in order to satisfy my expectations and rid himself of the business, should say, that the sentiments of his hero are so far above whatever can be said on the occasion, that he shall say nothing'.

To what Falconet has said, we may add, that supposing this method of leaving the expression of grief to the imagination, to be, as it was thought to be, the invention of the painter, and that it deserves all the praise that has been given it, still it is a trick that will serve but once; whoever does it a second time will not only want novelty, but be justly suspected of using artifice to evade difficulties. If difficulties overcome make a great part of the merit of Art, difficulties evaded can deserve but little commendation. Sir J. Reynolds, vol. i, p. 462, Eighth Discourse. R. P.

<sup>14</sup> *Antiquit. Explic.*, t. i, p. 50.

<sup>15</sup> For instance, he thus describes the degrees of sorrow actually expressed by Timanthes: 'Calchantem tristem, moestum Ulyssem, clamantem Ajacem, lamentantem Menelaum'. The screaming Ajax must have been a hideous figure, and as neither Cicero nor Quintilian mention him in their description of the picture, I am rather disposed to consider it an addition furnished out of his own head.

<sup>16</sup> Bellorii Admiranda, tab. ii, 12. Bellori was an Italian antiquary, born 1615, died 1696, wrote a great number of treatises, among them 'Admiranda Romanorum antiquitatum ac veteris sculptura vestigio a Petro Santi Bartoli delincanda cum notis', Jo. P. Bellori: Rome, 1695, in fol. Dryden, in his *Parallel of Poetry and Painting*, speaks of him as 'a most ingenious author yet living'. R. P.

<sup>17</sup> Plin., xxxiii, s. 8.

<sup>18</sup> 'Fundem', namely Myro (we read in Pliny, xxxiii, s. 8), 'vicit et Pythagoras Leontinus, qui fecit stadiodromon Aftylon, qui Olympiae ostenditur: et Libyn puerum tenentem tabulam, eodem loco, et mala ferentem nudum. Syracusis autem claudicantem; cujus hulceris dolorem sentire etiam spectantes videntur'. Let us examine the last words more closely. Is he not clearly speaking of a person who, on account of his painful cry, is generally known? 'cujus hulceris, etc.'; and this 'cujus' must refer to the 'claudicantem', and the 'claudicantem' perhaps to the still further removed 'puerum'. Nobody has a better right than Philoctetes to be well known on account of such a copy. I read therefore instead, 'claudicantem, Philoctetem', or, at least, I contend that the latter word has been expelled by the former like-sounding word, and we must read the two together, 'claudicantem Philoctetem'. Sophocles makes him *στρίβον κατ' ἀνδράκων ἔπειν*, and his lameness must be caused by his walking with little confidence on his wounded foot.

'A painter must compensate the natural deficiencies of his Art. He has but one sentence to utter, but one moment to exhibit', Sir J. Reynolds, Fourth Discourse, vol. i, 348. 'What is done by painting must be done at one blow: curiosity has received at once all the satisfaction it can have', *id.*, Eighth Discourse, p. 439.



'These important moments then (Fuseli says) which exhibit the united exertion of form and character in a single object or in participation with collateral beings, *at once*, and which with equal rapidity and pregnancy give us a glimpse of the past, and lead our eye to what follows, furnish the true materials of those technic powers which select direct the objects of imitation to their centre', Fuseli, *Life*, etc., Lecture iii, pp. 135-6. 'For of necessity (Harris says) every picture is a *punctum temporis* or instant', *Discourse on Music, Painting, and Poetry*, p. 63. Sir Joshua wrote after Harris, and before the publication of the *Laocoon*. R. P.

The references to the books and sections in Pliny are not always correct. I have made them so. R. P.

### CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup> According to Mr. De Quincey's paraphrase, 'essentially evanescent', on which words he has a long note, the earlier part of which is as follows:

'*Essentially evanescent.* The reader (he says) must lay especial stress on the word *essentially*, because else Lessing will be chargeable with a capital error. For it is in the very antagonism between the transitory reality and the non-transitory image of it, reproduced by painting or sculpture, that *one* main attraction of those arts is concealed. The shows of Nature, which we feel and know to be moving, unstable, and transitory, are by these arts arrested in a single moment of their passage, and frozen as it were into a motionless immortality. This truth has been admirably drawn into light, and finely illustrated, by Mr Wordsworth, in a *Sonnet on the Art of Landscape-Painting*; in which he insists upon it, as the great secret of its power, that it bestows upon

One brief moment, caught from fleeting time,  
The appropriate calm of blest Eternity.

Now, in this there might seem at first glance to be some opposition between Mr Wordsworth and Lessing; but all the illustrations of the *Sonnet* show that there is not. For the case is this: In the succession of parts which make up any appearance in nature, either these parts simply repeat each other (as in the case of a man walking, a river flowing, etc.), or they unfold themselves through a cycle, in which each step effaces the preceding (as in the case of a gun exploding, where the flash is swallowed up by the smoke effaced by its own dispersion, etc.). Now, the illustrations in Mr Wordsworth's poem are all of the former class; as the party of travellers just entering the wood, but not permitted, by the good considerate painter, absolutely to enter the wood, where they must be eternally hidden from us; so

again with regard to the little boat, if allowed to unmoor and go out a fishing, it might be lying hid for hours under the restless glory of the sun, but now we all see it "for ever anchored in its rocky bed", and so on; where the continuous self-repeating nature of the impression, together with its indefinite duration, predispose the mind to contemplate it under a form of unity, one mode of which exists in the eternal *Now* of the painter and the sculptor. But in successions of the other class, where the parts are not fluent, as in a line, but angular, as it were, to each other, not homogeneous but heterogeneous, not continuous but abrupt, the evanescence is *essential*: both because each part really *has*, in general, but a momentary existence, and still more because, all the parts being unlike, each is imperfect as a representative image of the whole process; whereas, in trains which repeat each other, the whole exists virtually in each part, and therefore reciprocally each part will be a perfect expression of the whole. Now, whatever is essentially imperfect, and waiting, as it were, for its complement, is thereby essentially evanescent, as it is only by vanishing that it makes room for this complement. Whilst objecting, therefore, to appearances *essentially* evanescent, as subjects for the artist, Lessing is by implication suggesting the same class from which Mr Wordsworth has drawn his illustrations'. DE QUINCEY'S *Works*, vol. xii, p. 253, note.

<sup>2</sup> Philippus, *Anthol.*, lib. xv, cap. 9, ep. 10:

Αἰεὶ γὰρ διψᾷς βρεφέων φόνον ἢ τὴν Ἰήσων  
Δεύτερος, ἡ Γλαυκὴ τὴν πάλι σοὶ πρόφασιν  
Ἔρρε καὶ ἐν κηρῷ παιδοκτόνε.

Philippus of Thessalonica probably lived in the time of Trajan, wrote a great many epigrams himself, and compiled one of the ancient *Greek Anthologies*. R. P.

<sup>3</sup> *Vita Apoll.*, lib. ii, cap. 22. There appear to have been three persons called Philostratus; the most celebrated wrote the life of Apollonius of Tyana, which was divided into eight books; it was entitled 'τὰ ἐς τὸν Τυάνεα Ἀπολλωνίου'. Apollonius was a Pythagorean philosopher, born at Tyana four years B.C. He wrote several works, and was believed to possess magical or supernatural powers. His life by Philostratus is said to be full of fables and incongruities. Philostratus was alive A.D. 244-9, probably born A.D. 182; he wrote various other works, of which the 'εἰκόνες, *imagines*' is reckoned to be the most pleasing; it was an explanation of the subject of Painting while he lived at Naples. R. P.

## CHAPTER IV

<sup>1</sup> Lessing observes, in a long note to this passage, that when the Chorus considers the misery of Philoctetes in this combination, it is his helpless solitude which more especially touches them. In these words we hear the social Greeks. I have, however, my doubts as to one of the passages belonging to this subject. It is this, v. 691-698 :

Exposed to the inclement skies,  
Deserted and forlorn he lies;  
No friend nor *yellow mourner* there,  
To sooth his sorrows and divide his care. FRANKLIN.

Ἴν' αὐτὸς ἦν πρ' σούρος, οὐκ ἔχων βάσιν  
Οὐδέ τιν' ἐγχώρων,  
Κακογείτονα παρ' ᾧ στόνον ἀντίτυπον βαρυβρῶτ' ἀποκλαύσ-  
ειεν αἵματηρόν.

Lessing discusses various translations of these lines, and contends that the comma should be placed after *κακογείτονα*, and taken away from *ἐγχώρων*, and the meaning would be, notwithstanding these later translations to the contrary, not 'an evil neighbour', but 'a neighbour to his woe'; as *κακόμαντις* does not mean 'an evil prophet', but 'a prophet of evil'; *κακότεχνος*, not 'a bad clumsy workman', but 'a worker of bad things'. Referring to one of the Latin translations Lessing says, 'If this translation be right, then the Chorus says the strongest thing that can ever be said in praise of human society; the wretched one has no man near him, he knows of no friendly neighbour'. Thomson had perhaps this passage before his eyes, when he makes Melisander<sup>1</sup>, left by some ruffians in a desert island, say :

Cast on the wildest of the Cyclad isles,  
Where never human foot had marked the shore;  
These ruffians left me, yet believe me, Arcas,  
Such is the rooted love we bear mankind;  
All ruffians as they were I never heard  
A sound so dismal as their parting oars.

To him also the society of the ruffians was preferable to

<sup>1</sup> *Agamemnon*, Act ii. Lessing took this reference to Thomson from Franklin's translation of Philoctetes. See Franklin's note to p. 134. R. P.

none. A grand and excellent meaning ! were it only certain that Sophocles had really so expressed himself. But I must reluctantly confess that I find in him nothing of the kind. As Lessing's amendment of the punctuation, and consequently of the meaning, has been adopted in all subsequent good editions of Sophocles, it is unnecessary to continue the translation of this very learned note, except to add that he approves of Franklin's translation. R. P.

<sup>2</sup> Mercure de France, Avril 1755, p. 177. Lessing's *Laocoon* was published in 1766. R. P.

<sup>3</sup> In that part of the account given by Thucydides of the Athenian expedition to Sicily, in which he narrates the last naval action before the mouth of the harbour of Syracuse, and describes the diversity of passions with which both armies beheld the action. 'During this doubtful conflict on the water', he says, 'the army on the shore of both sides had their struggle and contention of mind': then the misery of those who saw their side worsted is described; and then he says, 'others that looked on some part where the fight was equal, because the contention continued so as they could make no judgment as to it, *moving their bodies in their extreme fear in sympathy with their thoughts*, passed their time as ill as the worst of them'. Hobbes. ἄλλοι δὲ καὶ πρὸς ἀντίπαλόν τι τῆς ναυμαχίας ἀπιδόντες, διὰ τὸ ἀκρίτως ξυνεχὲς τῆς ἀμίλλης, καὶ τοῖς σώμασιν αὐτοῖς ἴσα τῇ δόξῃ περιδεῶς ξυναπονεύοντες, ἐν τοῖς χαλεπώτατα διήγον. vii, 71. R. P.

<sup>4</sup> Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, part I, sect. ii, pp. 50, 51. In a subsequent part of the same essay, the writer says,

In some of the Greek tragedies there is an attempt to excite compassion by the representation of the agonies of bodily pain. Philoctetes cries out and faints from the extremity of his suffering. Hippolytus and Hercules are both introduced as expiring under the severest tortures, which it seems even the fortitude of Hercules was incapable of supporting. In all these cases, however, it is not the pain which interests us, but some other circumstance. It is not the sore foot, but the solitude of Philoctetes which affects us and diffuses over that charming tragedy that romantic wildness which is so agreeable to the imagination. The agonies of Hercules and Hippolytus are interesting only because we foresee that death is to be the consequence. If those heroes were to recover, we should think the representation of their

sufferings perfectly ridiculous. What a tragedy would that be of which the distress consisted in a colic! Yet no pain is more exquisite. These attempts to excite compassion by the representation of bodily pain may be regarded as among the greatest breaches of decorum of which the Greek theatre has set the example. *Ib.* part I, sect. ii, pp. 53, 54. R. P.

<sup>5</sup> The passage to which Lessing refers, but does not fully cite, is as follows:

Sed videamus poetæ quid mali afferant! Lamentantes inducunt fortissimos viros: molliunt animos nostros ita deinde dulces ut non legantur modo sed etiam ediscantur sic ad malam domesticam disciplinam, vitamque umbratiliem et delicatam cum accesserunt etiam poetæ, nervos omnis virtutis elidunt, recte igitur à Platone educantur ex eâ civitate quam finxit ille cum mores optimos et optimum Republicis statum exquireret. *Zusc.*, lib. 1, 2, 11. R. P.

<sup>6</sup> I suppose Lessing refers to Ctesias of Ephesus, an epic poet, who wrote the *Περσής*. His age is unknown, but he is mentioned by Plutarch, *De Fluv.*, 18. R. P.

<sup>7</sup> Aristotle illustrates a proposition in his *Ethics* by reference to this conduct of Neoptolemus. He says: 'Again, if constancy makes you abiding in every opinion, it may be bad, as if it be in a false opinion; and if inconstancy makes you shifting from every opinion, there will be a good inconstancy; as with the Neoptolemus of Sophocles in the *Philoctetes*; for he is to be commended, in that he abided not in those resolutions to which he was persuaded by Ulysses, being angered at the cheat which had been practised on him'. Aristot. *E.N.*, vii, 2: 'Ἐτι εἰ πάσῃ δόξῃ ἐμμενετικὸν ποιεῖ ἡ ἐγκράτεια, φαύλη, οἷον εἰ καὶ τῇ ψευδεῖ καὶ εἰ πάσης δόξης ἡ ἀκρασία, ἔσται τις σπουδαία ἀκρασία· οἷον ὁ Σοφοκλέους Νεοπτόλεμος ἐν τῇ Φιλοκτήτῃ· ἔπαινετός γάρ, οὐκ ἐμμένων οἷς ἐπεισθῇ ὑπὸ τοῦ Ὀδυσσεύς, διὰ τὸ λυπεῖσθαι ψευδόμενος. R. P.

<sup>8</sup> Act. ii, sc. 3:—'De mes deguisemens que penserait Sophio?' says the son of Achilles. If this were not a fact, it would appear incredible; it would be thought a preposterous caricature of French Classical tragedy. R. P.

<sup>9</sup> *Trach.* v. 1088, 9; ὅστις ὥστε παρφένος βέβρυχα κλαίων.

<sup>10</sup> Garrick was still in all his glory when the *Laocoon* was written; he left the stage ten years later, 1776; died in June, 1779. This homage of Lessing is remarkable. R. P.

<sup>11</sup> The word used by Lessing is generally mistranslated

as 'acting', or 'la mimique'; but the paraphrase of De Quincey, 'subsidiary aids in its mechanic apparatus', conveys the true meaning of the word, which, I think, has in every edition of Lessing a slight misprint. It stands *Skavopoeie*; it should be *Skanopoeie*, from the Greek *Σκηνωσις*, 'tabernaculorum constructio'; see Stephen's *Thesaurus* on the word, citing Polyb. 6-28, 3. It is well known that the Greeks took great pains with the mechanical apparatus which was to introduce a Deity on the stage and perform other offices. *Θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς ἐπιφάνεις* was a proverb. R. P.

## CHAPTER V

<sup>1</sup> *Topographia Urbis Romae*, lib. iv, cap. 14. et quamquam hi (Agesander et Polydorus et Athenodorus Rhodii) ex Virgilii descriptione hanc statuam formavisse videntur, &c.

Marliani Bartolomeo, an Italian antiquary, born at Milan towards the end of the fifteenth century, died about 1560. His life was chiefly occupied with archæological researches, amongst which was *Topographia Urbis Romae*. R. P.

<sup>2</sup> *Suppl. aux Ant. Expliq.*, t. i, p. 242, 'Il semble qu'Agésandre Polydore et Athénodore, qui en furent les ouvriers, ayant travaillé comme à l'envie, pour laisser un monument, qui répondit à l'incomparable description qu'a fait Virgile de Laocoon'.

Montfaucon was a very learned Benedictine of St. Maur; born 1655, died 1741. His work, *L'Antiquité expliquée et représentée en Figures*, was published at Paris 1724, in five folio volumes, to which a supplement of as many volumes has been added. R. P.

<sup>3</sup> *Saturnalia*, l. v, c. 2 :

Quae Virgilius traxit a Graecis, dicturumne me putatis quae vulgo nota sunt? quod Theocritum sibi fecerit pastoralis operis autorem, ruralis Hesiodum? et quod in ipsiis Georgicis tempestatis serenitatisque signa de Arati Phaenomenis traxerit? vel quod eversionem Trojae cum Sinone suo et equo ligneo, caeterisque omnibus, quae librum secundum faciunt, a Plaandro pene ad verbum transcripserit? qui inter Graecos poetas eminet opere, quod a nuptiis Jovis et Junonis incipiens universas

historias, quae mediis omnibus saeculis usque ad aetatem ipsius Pisan-  
dri contigerunt, in unam seriem coactas redegerit, et unum ex diversis  
hiatibus temporum corpus effecerit? in quo opere inter historias  
caeteras interitus quoque Trojae in hunc modum relatus est. Quae  
fideliter Maro interpretando fabricatus est sibi Iliacae urbis ruinam.  
Sed et haec et talia ut pueris decantata praetereo.

Macrobius Ambrosius Aurelius Theodosius, a Latin  
writer of the fifth century. His chief work was *Saturna-  
liorum Conviviorum*, libri vii. ; a collection of discussions  
of the Saturnalia, the Roman Deities, and the Poetry of  
Virgil. He probably was a Greek, and lived in the age of  
Honorius and Theodosius. R. P.

<sup>4</sup> Quintus Calaber, or Quintus Smyrnaeus (for the name  
of Calaber seems to have been given him because a copy of  
his poem was first discovered in a convent of Calabria),  
wrote a poem on things παραλειπομένων Ὀμήρῳ, praeter-  
missorum ab Homero. His exact date is unknown, but  
probably he lived at the end of the fourth century after  
Christ. His poem was in fourteen books ; the subject,  
the events of the Trojan War from the death of Hector to  
the return of the Greeks ; the 12th and 13th books refer  
to the wooden horse. It is probable that his poem was  
founded on those of Aretinus and Lesches. Smith's *G.  
and R. Biog.*, iii, 637, 8. The edition of Q. Calaber, which  
I have used, is one published at Leyden, 1734. R. P.

<sup>5</sup> *Paralip.*, lib. xii, v. 398-408 ; v. 439-474.

<sup>6</sup> Or rather a serpent, for Lycophron appears to have  
only accepted one :

καὶ παιδόβρωτος πορκέως νήσους διπλάς.

Porces, ὁ Πόρκης, was the name of Lycophron's serpent ;  
ἡ Χαριβόα, Charibaea, was the name of the other.  
Λυκώφρωνος Ἀλέξανδρα, ed. Lipsiae, 1830, p. 84, l. 347.  
See note : Πόρκης καὶ Χαριβόα ὀνόματα ὕφρων οἱ πλεῖσταντες  
ἐκ τῶν Καλίδωνων νήσων ἦλθον εἰς Τροίαν καὶ διεφθείραν τοὺς  
παῖδας Λαοκρόντος, κ.τ.λ. See, too, p. 308, the Greek  
paraphrase ; and p. 467, Scaliger's Latin translation,  
under the name of *Cassandra*, l. 347. The poem is a long  
vapid Iambic monologue of 1474 verses, in which Cassan-  
dra prophesies the fall of Troy. Lycophron was a  
celebrated grammarian and poet ; he lived at Alexandria  
under Ptolemy Philadelphus, who died B.C. 40. R. P.

<sup>7</sup> I remember that the picture of which Eumolpus gives an account in Petronius<sup>1</sup> may be cited against me. He represents the destruction of Troy, and especially the history of Laocoon, as fully and completely as Virgil; and in a certain gallery at Naples, in which it stood, there were other ancient pictures by Zeuxis, Protogenes, Apelles, so there is a presumption in favour of this picture also being considered an old Greek picture. But I must be allowed not to consider a romance poet as an historian. This gallery, and this picture, and this Eumolpus, have, according to all probability, never existed except in the imagination of Petronius. Nothing more clearly betrays their entire invention than the obvious traces of an almost schoolboy's imitation of Virgil's description. Virgil says (*Aen.* ii, 199-224):

Hic alfid majus miseris multoque tremendum  
 Objicitur magis, atque improvida pectora turbat.  
 Laocoon, ductus Neptuno sorte sacerdos,  
 Sollemnes taurum ingentem mactabat ad aras.  
 Ecce autem gemini a Tenedo tranquilla per alta  
 (Horresco referens) immensa orbibus angues  
 Incumbunt pelago, pariterque ad litora tendunt;  
 Pectora quorum inter fluctus arrecta, jubaque  
 Sanguineae superant undas; pars cetera pontum  
 Pone legit sinuatque immensa volumine terga;  
 Fit sonitus spumante salo. Jamque arva tenebant,  
 Ardentesque oculos suffecti sanguine et igni,  
 Sibila lambebant linguis vibrantibus ora.  
 Diffugimus visu exsanguis. Illi agmine certo  
 Laocoonta petunt; et primum parva duorum  
 Corpora natorum serpens amplexus uterque  
 Impliat et miseros morsu depascitur artus;  
 Post ipsum, auxilio subeuntem ac tela ferentem,  
 Corripunt, spirisque ligant ingentibus; et jam  
 Bis medium amplexi, bis collo squamea circum  
 Terga dati, superant capite et cervicibus altis.  
 Ille simul manibus tendit divellere nodos,

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<sup>1</sup> Petronius is described by Tacitus (*Ann.* xvi, 18, 19) as the most accomplished voluptuary at the court of Nero. His days were passed in slumber, his nights in visiting and revelry. But he was no vulgar spendthrift, no dull besotted debauchee. An air of refinement pervaded all his extravagancies; with him luxury was a serious study, and he became a proficient in the science. The careless, graceful ease, assuming almost the guise of simplicity, which distinguished all his words and actions, was the delight of the fashionable world; he gained by polished and ingenious folly an amount of fame which others often fail to achieve by a long career of laborious virtue. Smith's *Dict.* His title of 'arbiter' comes from the expression: 'elegantiae arbiter' in Tacitus. B. P.



Perfusus sanie vittas atroque veneno,  
 Clamores simul horrendos ad sidera tollit :  
 Qualis mugitus, fugit cum saucius aram  
 Taurus et incertam excussit cervicæ securim.

A greater omen, and of worse portent,  
 Did our unwary minds with fear torment,  
 Concurring to produce the dire event.  
 Laocoön, Neptune's priest by lot that year,  
 With solemn pomp then sacrificed a steer ;  
 When (dreadful to behold !) from sea we spied  
 Two serpents, ranked abreast, the seas divide,  
 And smoothly sweep along the swelling tide.  
 Their flaming crests above the waves they show ;  
 Their bellies seem to burn the seas below ;  
 Their speckled tails advance to steer their course,  
 And on the sounding shore the flying billows force  
 And now the strand, and now the plain they held.  
 Their ardent eyes with bloody streaks were filled ;  
 Their nimble tongues they brandished as they came  
 And licked their hissing jaws, that sputtered flame.  
 We fled amazed : their destined way they take,  
 And to Laocoön and his children make ;  
 And first around the tender boys they wind,  
 Then with their sharpened fangs their limbs and bodies grind.  
 The wretched father, running to their aid  
 With pious haste, but vain, they next invade ;  
 Twice round his waist their winding volumes rolled ;  
 And twice about his gasping throat they fold.  
 The priest thus doubly choked—their crests divide,  
 And towering o'er his head in triumph ride.  
 With both his hands he labours at the knots ;  
 His holy fillets the blue venom blots ;  
 His roaring fills the fitting air around.  
 Thus when an ox receives a glancing wound,  
 He breaks his bands, the fatal altar flies,  
 And with loud bellowings breaks the yielding skies.

DRYDEN'S *Virgil*, Aeneis II.

And Eumolpus (of whom it may be predicated that he has shared the fate of all impromptu poets, whose memory has always as great a part in their verses as their imagination) says :

Ecce alia monstra. Celsa qua Tenedos mare  
 Dorsò repellit, tumido consurgunt freta,  
 Undaque resultat scissa tranquillo minor,  
 Qualis silenti nocte remorum sonus  
 Longe refertur cum premunt classes mare,  
 Pulsunq; marmor abiete imposita gemit,  
 Respicimus, angues orbibus geminis ferunt  
 Ad saxa fluctus : tumida quorum pectora,  
 Rates ut altae, lateribus spumas agunt ;  
 Dant caudas sonitum ; liberae ponto jubae  
 Coruscant luminibus, fulmineum jubar

Incendit aequor, sibilisque undae tremunt.  
 Stupuerunt mentes. Infulis stabant sacri  
 Phrygioque cultu gemina nati pignora  
 Laocoonte, quos repente tergoribus ligant  
 Angues corrumpi: parvulas illi manus  
 Ad ora referunt: neuter auxilio sibi,  
 Uterque fratri; transtulit pietas vices,  
 Morsque ipsa miseros mutuo perdit metu.  
 Accumulat ecce liberum funus parens,  
 Infirmus auxiliator; invadunt virum  
 Jam morte pasti, membraque ad terram trahunt.  
 Jacet sacerdos inter aras victima.

Vol. ii, p. 28, Brescia, 1807; *Satire de Tito Petroneo Arbitro*, Latin and Italian. R. P.

The principal features in these passages are the same, and in various places the same words are used. But these are trifles which are at once apparent to us. There are other marks of imitation which are finer, but not less certain. If the imitator be a man who has any confidence in himself, he rarely imitates without wishing to embellish; and, if this embellishment is in his opinion successful, he is soon enough to sweep away with his tail the footsteps which would have betrayed the way by which he came. It is by this very foolish desire to embellish, and this care to appear original, that he is detected. For his embellishment is nothing but exaggeration and unnatural refinement. *Virgil* says, '*sanguineae juba*'. *Petronius*, '*juba luminibus coruscant*'. *Virgil*, '*ardentes oculos suffecti sanguine et igni*'. *Petronius*, '*fulmineum jubar incendit aequor*'. *Virgil*, '*fit sonitus spumante salo*'. *Petronius*, '*sibilis undae tremunt*'. And so the imitator always goes on from the Great to the Monstrous; from the Wonderful to the Impossible. The boys coiled round by the serpents are in *Virgil* a by-work (*παρεργον*), which he adds to the main work by a few significant touches, in which we are conscious of nothing but their helplessness and their lamentation. *Petronius* paints elaborately this by-work, and makes two heroes out of these boys:—

Neuter auxilio sibi  
 Uterque fratri transtulit plus vices  
 Morsque ipsa miseros mutuo perdit metu.

Who expects from men, from children, this self-abasement? How much better the Greek knew human nature (*Quintus Calaber*, lib. xii, x, 459, 61), who, on the appear-

ance of these terrible serpents, makes the mother forget her children, so entirely was each person occupied in saving his own life.

ἔνθα γυναῖκες

Οἰμῶζον, καὶ ποῦ τις ἔδῳν ἐπαλῆσατο τέκνων,  
Αὐτὴ ἄλευσμένη στυγερὸν μόρον.

As a general rule the imitator endeavours to conceal himself by throwing a new light upon objects, and by placing those which in the original are in shadow in the light, and *vice versâ*. Virgil takes pains to make clearly visible the great size of the serpents, because upon their size the probability of the events which follow depend: the tumultuous rushing noise with which they come is only an accessory circumstance, and intended to excite a more vivid idea of their size. Petronius, on the contrary, makes the accessory the principal; describes the tumultuous rushing noise with all conceivable extravagance, and so much forgets the size that we can only infer it from the noise. It is difficult to believe that he could have fallen into this clumsy defect, if he had only painted from his own imagination, and had not had a model before him, which he wished to copy, but did not wish to reveal that he copied.

So it is that we can with certainty pronounce every poetical picture, overloaded with little traits and wanting in great ones, to be an unsuccessful imitation, however many prettinesses it may have, and whether we know the original or not.

<sup>8</sup> *Suppl. aux Antiq.*, Expl. t. i, p. 243: 'Il y a quelque petite différence entre ce que dit Virgile, et ce que le marbre représente. Il semble, selon ce que dit le Poète, que les serpens quitterent les deux enfans pour venir entortiller le père, au lieu que dans ce marbre ils lient en même tems les enfans et leur père'.

<sup>9</sup> Their destined way they take,  
And to Laocoon and his children make;  
And first around the tender boys they wind,  
Then with their sharpened fangs their limbs and bodies  
grind. DRYDEN. R. P.

<sup>10</sup> Donatus, Ælius, a renowned grammarian and rhetorician. Servius constantly refers to him. He must have composed a commentary on Virgil. He taught at

Rome in the middle of the fourth century, and was the preceptor of St. Jerome. R. P.

<sup>11</sup> Donatus, ad v. 227, lib. ii, Aen.: 'Mirandum non est clypeo et simulacri vestigiis tegi potuisse, quos supra et longos et validos dixit, et multiplici ambitu circumdasse Laocoontis corpus ac liberorum et fuisse superfluum partem'. It seems to me that as to these words, *mirandum non est*, either you must leave out the word *non*, or that there is something wanting in the end of the second proposition. For as the serpents were so extraordinarily large, it is much to be wondered at that they could be concealed under the shield of the goddess, if this shield was not itself very large, and did not belong to a colossal figure; and that was what the wanting part of the second proposition must have stated, or the *non* has no sense.

<sup>12</sup> Shakespeare knew this: describing Gloster's death, he says:—

But see his face is black, and full of blood,  
His eyeballs further out than when he lived,  
Staring full ghastly like a strangled man:  
His hair uprear'd, his nostrils stretched with struggling;  
His hands abroad displayed, as one who grasp'd  
And tugg'd for life, and was by strength subdued.

*Hen. VI. Part ii, Act 3, sc. 2. R. P.*

<sup>13</sup> With both his hands he labours at the knots.

*Aen. ii, DRYDEN. R. P.*

<sup>14</sup> Twice round his waist their winding volumes rolled,  
And twice about his gasping throat they fold;

The priest thus doubly choked, their crests divide,  
And towering o'er his head in triumph ride.

*Aen. ii, DRYDEN. R. P.*

<sup>15</sup> Of which the Holy Family by Raffaello in the Munich Gallery is a striking example. R. P.

<sup>16</sup> In the fine edition of Dryden's English Virgil (London, 1697, in grand folio). And yet this gives the windings of the serpents round the body only once, and has not brought them round the neck at all. If so moderate an artist deserves any exculpation, the only one that can be made is that the engraving ought only to be considered as an illustration of a book, and not as a work of art on its own account.

<sup>17</sup> This is the opinion of De Piles, in his remarks upon Du Fresnoy, v. 120 :

Remarquez s'il vous plaît, que les Draperies tendres et légères n'étant données qu'au sexe féminin, les anciens sculpteurs ont évité autant qu'ils ont pu, d'habiller les figures d'hommes ; parcequ'ils ont pensé, comme nous l'avons déjà dit, qu'en sculpture on ne pouvait imiter les étoffes & que les gros plis faisaient un mauvais effet. Il y a presque autant d'exemples de cette vérité, qu'il y a parmi les antiques de figures d'hommes nus. Je rapporterais seulement celui du Laocoon, lequel selon la vrai semblance devrait être vêtu. En effet, quelle apparence y-a-t'il qu'un fils de Roi, qu'un Prêtre d'Apollon se trouvât tout nud dans la cérémonie actuelle d'un sacrifice ; car les serpens passèrent de l'Isle de Ténédos au rivage de Troie & surprirent Laocoon & ses fils dans le temps même qu'il sacrifiait à Neptune sur le bord de la mer, comme le marque Virgile dans le second livre de son *Enéide*. Cependant les artistes, qui sont les auteurs de ce bel ouvrage ont bien vu, qu'ils ne pouvaient pas leur donner de vêtements convenables à leur qualité, sans faire comme un amas de pierres, dont la masse ressembleroit à un rocher, au lieu de trois admirables figures, qui ont été & qui sont toujours l'admiration des siècles. C'est pour cela que de deux inconvéniens, ils ont jugé celui des draperies beaucoup plus fâcheux, que celui d'aller contre la vérité même.

<sup>18</sup> Lessing does not mean, I think, as sometimes supposed, the hand of a slave, but the hand which is the servant of the body. So Jeremy Taylor speaks of 'the discerning head and the servile feet, the thinking heart and the working hand'. *LADY CARBERRY'S Fun. Sermon*. R. P.

<sup>19</sup> 'His holy fillets the blue venom blots'. *DRYDEN*. R. P.

<sup>20</sup> Reason must ultimately determine our choice on every occasion ; but this reason may still be exerted ineffectually by applying to taste principles which, though right as far as they go, yet do not reach the object. No man, for instance, can deny that it seems at first view very reasonable that a statue which is to carry down to posterity the resemblance of an individual, should be dressed in the fashion of the times, in the dress which he himself wore ; this would certainly be true, if the dress were part of the man ; but after a time, the dress is only an amusement for an antiquarian ; and if it obstructs the general design of the piece, it is to be disregarded by the artist. Common sense must here give way to a higher sense. In the naked form, and in the disposition of the drapery, the difference between one artist and another is principally seen. But if he is compelled to exhibit the

modern dress, the naked form is entirely hid, and the drapery is already disposed by the skill of the tailor. Were a Phidias to obey such absurd commands, he would please no more than an ordinary sculptor; in the inferior parts of every art, the learned and the ignorant are nearly upon a level. These were probably among the reasons that induced the sculptor of that wonderful figure of Laocoon to exhibit him naked, notwithstanding he was surprised in the act of sacrificing to Apollo, and consequently ought to have been shown in his sacerdotal habits, if those greater reasons had not preponderated. Art is not yet in so high estimation with us, as to obtain so great a sacrifice as the ancients made, especially the Grecians, who suffered themselves to be represented naked, whether they were generals, law-givers, or kings. SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, *Lit. Works*, vol. 1, Discourse vii, pp. 419, 420.

<sup>21</sup> Here, De Quincey rightly observes, is a singular specimen of logic. Necessity invented clothes; and, therefore, Art can have nothing to do with drapery. On the same principle, Art would have nothing to do with architecture. . . .

Necessity invented dress, and to a certain extent the same necessity continues to preside over it; a necessity, derived from climate and circumstances, dictates a certain texture of the dress; a necessity, derived from the human form and limbs, dictates a certain arrangement and corresponding adaptation. But thus far dress is within the province of a mechanic art. Afterwards—and perhaps in a very genial climate, not afterwards but originally—dress is cultivated as an end *per se*, both directly for its beauty, and as a means of suggesting many pleasing ideas of rank, power, youth, sex, or profession. Cultivated for this end, the study of drapery is a fine art; and a draped statue is a work not in one, but in two departments of art. Neither is it true, that the sense of necessity and absolute limitation is banished from the idea of a fine art. On the contrary, this sense is indispensable as a means of resisting (and, therefore, realizing) the sense of freedom; the freedom of a fine art is found not in the absence of restraint, but in the conflict with it'. DE QUINCEY'S *Works*, vol. xii, sect. vi, note to p. 273. R. P.

## CHAPTER VI

<sup>1</sup> Maffei, Richardson, and lately Herr von Hagedorn (*Reflections on Painting*, p. 37; Richardson, *Traité de la Peinture*, t. iii, p. 513). De Fontaines does not deserve to be added to these men. It is true that he maintains, in observations accompanying his translation of Virgil, that

the poet had this group in his eye ; but he is so ignorant that he declares it to be a work of Phidias.

<sup>2</sup> Painting, having the eye for its organ, cannot be conceived to imitate, but through the media of visible objects. And farther, its mode of imitating being always motionless, there must be subtracted from these the medium of motion. It remains, then, that colour and figure are the only media through which painting imitates.

Music, passing to the mind through the organ of the ear, can imitate only by sounds and motions.

Poetry, having the ear also for its organ, as far as words are considered to be no more than mere sounds, can go no farther in imitating, than may be performed by sound and motion. But then, as these its sounds stand by compact for the various ideas with which it is fraught, it is enabled by this means to imitate as far as language can express; and that, it is evident, will, in a manner, include all things.' *HARRIS, Discourses*, etc., ch. i, pp. 57, 58. R. P.

<sup>3</sup> I can cite nothing in this respect more decisive than the poem of Sadolet. It is worthy of an old poet, and as it may well supply the place of an engraving, I think it right to insert it here at length.

#### De Laocoontis Statua Jacobi Sadoletis Carmen.

Ecce alto terrae e cumulo, ingentisque ruinae  
Visceribus, iterum reducein longinqua reduxit  
Laocoonta dies ; aulis regalibus olim  
Qui stetit, atque tuos ornat, Tite, penates.  
Divinae simulacrum artis, nec docta vetustas  
Nobilius spectabat opus, nunc celsa revisit  
Exemptum tenebris redivivae moenia Romae.  
Quid primum summumve loquar ? miserumne parentem  
Et prolem geminam ? an sinuatos flexibus angues  
Terribili aspectu ? caudasque irasque draconum  
Vulneraque et veros, saxo moriente, doloros ?  
Horret ad haec animus, mutaque ab imagine pulsat  
Pectora, non parvo pietas commixta tremori.  
Proluxum bini spiris glomerantur in orbem  
Ardentes colubri et sinuosis orbibus errant,  
Ternaque multiplici constringunt corpora nexu.  
Vix oculi sufferre valent, crudele tuendo  
Exitium, casusque foros : micat alter, et ipsam  
Laocoonta petit, totumque infraque supraque  
Implicat et rabido tandem ferit illa morsu.  
Connexum refugit corpus, torquentia sese  
Membra, latusque retro sinuatum a vulnere cernas.  
Ille dolore acri, et laniatu impulsus acerbo,  
Dat gemitum ingentem, crudosque evellere dentes  
Connixus laevam impatiens ad terga Chelydri  
Objicit : intendunt nervi, collectaque ab omni  
Corpore vis frustra summis conatibus instat.  
Ferre nequit rabiem, et de vulnere murmur anhelum est.

At serpens lapsu crebro redeunte subintrat  
 Lubricus, intortoque ligat genna intima nodo.  
 Absistunt surae, spirisque prementibus arctum  
 Crus tumet, obsepto turgent vitalia pulsu,  
 Liventesque atro distendunt sanguine venas.  
 Nec minus in natos eadem vis effera saevit  
 Implexuque angit rapido, miseraundaque membra  
 Dilacerat : jamque alterius depasta cruentum  
 Pectus, suprema genitorem voce ciantis,  
 Circumjectu orbis, validoque volumine foleit.  
 Alter adhuc nullo violatus corpora morsu,  
 Dum parat adducta caudam divellere planta,  
 Horret ad aspectum miseris patris, haeret in illo  
 Et jam jam ingentes fletus, lacrymasque cadentes  
 Anceps in dubio retinet timor. Ergo perenni  
 Qui tantum statuitis opus jam laude nitentes,  
 Artifices magni (quanquam et mellioribus actis  
 Queritur aeternum nomen, multoque licebat  
 Clarius ingentum venturae tradere famae)  
 Attamen ad laudem quaecunque oblata facultas  
 Egregium hanc rapere, et summa ad fastigia mti.  
 Vos rigidum lapidem vivis animare figuris  
 Eximii, et vivos spiranti in marmore sensus  
 Inserere, aspicimus motumque iramque doloremque,  
 Et pene audimus gemitus : vos extulit olim  
 Clara Rhodos, vestrae jacuerunt artis honores  
 Tempore ab immenso quos rursus in luce secunda  
 Roma videt, celebratque frequens : operisque vetusti  
 Gratia parta recens. Quanto praestantius ergo est  
 Ingenio, aut quovis extendere fata labore,  
 Quam fastus et opes et inanem extendere luxum.

(O Leodagarii a Quercu farrago Poematum, t. ii, p. 63.)

Gruter also has incorporated this poem with another of Sadolet's in his well-known collection (*Delic. Poet. Italorum*, Parte alt., p. 582), but with many errors. For *bini* (v. 14) he reads *vivi* : for *errant* (v. 15) *oram*, etc.

Cardinal Jaques Sadolet was born at Modena in 1477, and justly obtained considerable renown as a classical scholar. He was joint secretary with Bembo to Leo X, who made him Bishop of Carpentras in 1517. He was also secretary to Clement VII, and created by Paul III. a Cardinal in 1536. He died in Rome, 1547. He was the author of several works in the Latin language, and wrote a good many Latin letters, which are still interesting. Among his Latin poems, the *Curtius* and the *Laocoon* are the most remarkable. His works, four volumes in quarto, were published at Verona, 1737. Mr Hallam says (*Lit. of Europe*, i, 264), 'Bembo and Sadolet had by common confession reached a consummate elegance of style, in com-



parison of which the best productions of the last age seemed very imperfect'; but I venture to think Mr Hallam errs in saying (p. 322), that 'except his epistles none of Sadolet's works are now read, or appear to have been very conspicuous in his own age'. Mr Hallam makes no reference to Sadolet's *Laocoon*, or to Lessing's estimation of it. R. P.

<sup>4</sup> Heyne's opinion on the subject is not uninteresting. Excursus vi, ad lib. 2, Virgil, ed. Wagner: 'Inanis erat disputatio omnis, utrum artifex poetam, an hic artificem ante oculos habuerit; restat enim tertium, quod verum est, habuisse utrumque diversos auctores quos sequeretur; fuisse quoque utriusque consilium planè diversum, alter enim hoc efficere voluit, ut miserationem moveret, alter autem Maro noster, ut terrorem. Hoc si animadvertis, ut saepe fit, omne acumen concidit: reddit res ad summam simplicitatem'. R. P. See Göthe's *Ueber Laocoon*, B. 38, pp. 48-9.

<sup>5</sup> *De la Peinture*, tome iii, p. 516: 'C'est l'horreur que les Troiens ont conçue contre Laocoon, qui était nécessaire à Virgile pour la conduite de son Poème: et cela le mène à cette Description pathétique de la destruction de la patrie de son héros. Aussi Virgile n'avait garde de diviser l'attention sur la dernière nuit, pour une grande ville entière, par la peinture d'un petit malheur d'un Particulier'.

<sup>6</sup> With gleaming front the other serpent then  
 Attacks Laocoon, and within its coils  
 Entwining him from neck to heel—his entrails  
 Tears with its rapid bites. . . .  
 The serpent then with quick returning glide  
 Creeps in and binds with twisted knot his knees. R. P.

<sup>7</sup> Twice round his waist their winding volumes rolled,  
 And twice about his gasping throat they fold. R. P.

## CHAPTER VII

<sup>1</sup> Hear Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his twelfth Discourse: 'It is vain for painters or poets to endeavour to invent without materials on which the mind may work, and from which invention must originate—nothing can come of nothing' (vol. i, 389).

'I know there are many artists of great fame who appear never to have looked out of themselves, and who probably would think it derogatory to their character to be supposed to borrow from any other painter. But when we recollect and compare the works of such men with those who took to their assistance the inventions of others, we shall be convinced of the great advantage of this latter practice'. He cites in favour of this proposition Raffaello, who showed in his noblest cartoon how much he had studied Masaccio. 'The habit' (he adds) 'of contemplating and brooding over the ideas of great geniuses till you find yourself warmed by the contact, is the true method of an artist-like mind: it is impossible, in the presence of those great men, to think or invent in a mean manner: a state of mind is acquired that receives those ideas only which relish of grandeur and simplicity' (vol. ii, 48, 51, 52). R. P.

<sup>2</sup> The first edition is in 1747, the second in 1755, and is entitled *Polymetis; or, an Enquiry Concerning the Agreement between the Works of the Roman Poets and the Remains of the Ancient Artists, being an attempt to illustrate them mutually from one another*. See Preface for some notice of this work. R. P.

<sup>3</sup> Val. Flaccus, lib. vi, 55, 6; *Polymetis, Dial.* vi, p. 50.

<sup>4</sup> I say it may be, though I would wager ten to one that it is not. Juvenal is speaking of the early days of the Republic, when nothing was known of splendour and prodigality; and when the soldier spent the gold and silver which he had earned on the decoration of his horse and his arms (Sat. xi, 100-7):

Tunc rudis, et Græcis mirari noscitur artes,  
Urbibus eversis, prædæ in parte reperta,  
Magnum artificum frangebatur pocula miles;  
Ut phaleris gauderet equus, cæclataque cassis  
Romulæ simulacra feræ mansuescere jussæ  
Imperii fato, geminos sub rupe Quirinos,  
Ac nudam effigiem clypeo fulgentis et hasta,  
Pendentisque Dei perituro ostenderet hosti.

Admirably rendered by Gifford:

Then the rough soldier, yet untaught by Greece,  
To hang enraptured o'er a finished piece,  
If haply, mid the congregated spoils,  
Proofs of his power and guerdon of his toils,  
Some antique vase of master hands were found,  
Would dash the glittering bauble on the ground,  
That in new forms the molten fragments drest,  
Might blaze illustrious round his courser's chest;  
Or, beaming from his awful helmet, show  
The rise of Rome to a devoted foe. R. P.

Lessing thinks the two last lines obscure — ‘Thus much is plain, that this was a figure of the god Mars ; but what does the adjective *pendentis* signify?’ He proceeds to examine the solution offered by various authorities, Rigault, Britannicus, and Spence, who adopts the opinion of Addison (*Travels*, p. 182). Addison says :

Juvenal here describes the simplicity of the old Roman soldiers, and the figures that were generally engraven on their helmets. The first of them was the wolf, giving suck to Romulus and Remus ; the second, which is comprehended in the two last verses, is not so intelligible. Some of the commentators tell us that the god here mentioned is Mars ; that he comes to see his two sons sucking the wolf ; and that the old sculptors generally drew their figures naked, that they might have the advantage of representing the different swellings of the muscles and the turns of the body, but they are extremely at a loss what is meant by the word *pendentis*. Some fancy it expresses only the great embossment of the figure ; others believe it hung off the helmet. Lubin supposes that the god Mars was engraven on the shield ; and that he is said to be hanging, because the shield which bore him hung on the left shoulder. One of the old interpreters is of opinion, that by hanging is only meant a posture of bending forward to strike the enemy ; another will have it, that whatever is placed on the head may be said to hang, as we call hanging gardens such as are planted on the top of the house. Several learned men, who like none of these explanations, believe there has been a fault in the transcriber ; and that *pendentis* ought to be *perdentis* ; but they quote no manuscript in favour of their conjecture. The true meaning of the words is certainly as follows. The Roman soldiers, who were not a little proud of their founder and the military genius of their republic, used to bear on their helmets the first history of Romulus, who was begot by the god of war, and suckled by a wolf. The figure of the god was made as if descending on the priestess Ilia ; or, as others call her, Rhea Sylvia. As he was represented descending, his figure appeared suspended in the air over the vestal virgin ; in which sense the word *pendentis* is extremely proper and poetical. Beside the antique Basso-Relievo that made me first think of this interpretation, I have since met with the same figures on the reverse of a couple of antient coins, which were stamped in the reign of Antoninus Pius.

Thus far, says Spence, Mr Addison, who by a casual hint from a Relievo, and afterwards by the plain evidence of a medal, has at last fixed so doubtful an expression to so clear and poetical an idea, as it may now give everybody who reads this passage. Lessing is not at all satisfied with this explanation ; he ends by saying, ‘The passage of the poet is corrupt, and must remain so. It will remain so if twenty new explanations were paraded before us. Such, for instance, might be that which supposes *pendentis* to be used in a figurative sense, according to which it would have the meaning of uncertain,

unresolved, and undecided. *Mars pendens* would then be the same as *Mars incertus* or *Mars communis*. 'Dii communes sunt (says Servius, ad. v, 113, l. xii, *Aen.*), Mars, Bellona, Victoria, quia hi in bello utrique parti favere possunt', and the whole line, 'Pendentisque Dei (effigiem) ostenderet hosti'. Nevertheless, Lessing says 'non liquet', but I venture to think it a very probable construction. R. P.

<sup>5</sup> Till I got acquainted with these *Auræ* (or Sylphs) I found myself always at a loss in reading the well-known story of Cephalus and Procris, in Ovid. I could never imagine how Cephalus's crying out *Aura Venias* (though in ever so languishing a manner) could give anyone a suspicion of his being false to Procris. As I had been always used to think that *Aura* meant the air in general, or a gentle breeze in particular, I thought Procris' jealousy less founded than the most extravagant jealousies generally are: but when I had once found that *Aura* might signify a very handsome young lady, as well as the air, the case was entirely altered; and the story seemed to go on in a very reasonable manner. SPENCE'S *Polymetis*, Dialogue XIII, p. 208.

<sup>6</sup> Juven. *Sat.* viii, 52-55:

at tu  
Nil nisi Cæcropides; truncoque simillimus Hermæ:  
Nullo quippe alio viveris discrimine, quam quod  
Illi marmoreum caput est, tua vivit imago.

Gifford renders it:

While thou in mean inglorious pleasure lost  
With 'Cærops! Cærops!' all thou hast to boast  
Art a full brother to the crossway stone,  
Which clowns have chipped the head of Hermes on. R. P.

If Spence had taken the Greek writers into his counsel, perhaps he would, but perhaps he would not, have lighted upon the old Aesop fable, which, out of such a *Hermes* pillar, throws a much fairer, and, for the purpose, a much more indispensable light than this passage in Juvenal: '*Mercury*', says Aesop, 'much wished to know in what estimation he was holden by men. He concealed his godhead and went to a sculptor. Here he saw a statue of Jupiter, and asked the artist what was the price of it! a drachma, was the answer. Mercury laughed: and this Juno? (he added.) About the same. At last he saw his own image, and thought to himself: I am the messenger of the gods; all gain comes from me; men must put a higher value on me. And this god here? (pointing to his image) how dear is he! That one, said

the artist. Oh ! if you buy the other two you shall have this one "into the bargain". Mercury took himself off'. But the statuarist did not know him, and could not have intended to wound his self-love, but must have formed his opinion on the statue merely as a matter of business, and on that ground only have set so small a value on it. The inferior rank of the god which it represented could have nothing to do with it, for the artist valued his work according to the ability, industry, and labour which the execution of it required, and not according to the rank and worth of the being it represented. The statue of Mercury, as it cost less, must have required less ability, industry, and labour than would be required for a statue of Jupiter or Juno. And so the fact was. The statues of Jupiter and Juno exhibited the persons of these deities at full length. The statue of Mercury on the other hand was a bad four-cornered pillar, with a mere bust. What marvel, then, that he was thrown into the bargain for nothing? Mercury overlooked this circumstance, because he had present to him only his own supposed over-weening merit, and therefore his humiliation was as natural as deserved. But you would look in vain among the expositors, translators, and imitators of Aesop's fables for the slightest trace of this explanation. But I could mention a long list of them, if it were worth while, who have understood this fable simply, that is, have not understood it at all. They have either not perceived, or at least have exaggerated, the implied absurdity of supposing that all statues were equally difficult to execute. What might appear a defect in this fable is the low price which the artist puts on his Jupiter. No toymaker would make a doll for a drachma—a drachma must be taken as denoting generally a very low price. (*Fab. Aesop.* 90, ed. Haupt. p. 70.)

<sup>7</sup> Born B.C. 54 or 59, died young. R. P.

<sup>8</sup> Tibull. *Eleg.* 4, l. 3, 25, 32; Polymetis, *Dial.*, p. 84.

<sup>9</sup> Statius, l. i; Sylv. 5. v. 8; Polym. *Dial.* vii, p. 81. Statius stands in the first rank of the heroic poets of the Silver age—of whose life very little is known. He is mentioned by Juvenal. His extant works are *Silvarum libri v*; *Thebaidos libri xii*; *Achilleidos libri 10*, which

last he died while writing. So Dante introduces him in Canto 21 of the *Purgatorio* :

Stazio la gente ancor di là mi noma  
 Cantai di Tebe, e poi del grande Achille.  
 Ma caddi in via con la seconda soma. v. 91. 4. R. P.

<sup>10</sup> Lucretius *de R. N.*, l. v, 736-747 :—

It Ver et Venus, et Veneris prænuntius ante  
 Pinnatus graditur Zephyrus; vestigia propter  
 Flora quibus mater præsargens ante viai  
 Cuncta coloribus egregiis et odoribus opplet.  
 Inde loci sequitur Calor aridus, et comes una  
 Pulverulenta Ceres; et Etesia flabra Aquilonum.  
 Inde Autumnus adit; graditur simul Evius Evau;  
 Inde aliae tempestates ventique sequuntur,  
 Altitonans Voltumnus et Auster fulminis pollens.  
 Tandem Bruma nives adfert, pigrumque rigorem  
 Reddit; Hiems sequitur, crepitans ac dentibus Algas.

Which I venture to render :—

Then Ver, and Venus, and her certain herald  
 Zephyr on wings upborne, and, as they tread,  
 Maternal Flora scatters in their path  
 Odours and colours bright, which all things fill.  
 Next comes dry Heat, and her companion sure  
 Ceres, with dust begirt: then the Gales  
 Etesian of the North: and Autumn next,  
 With jolly Bacchus in her train, comes on.  
 Then follow Tempests and fierce Winds: Vultumnus  
 Thundering on high, and Auster's lightning blast.  
 Bruma at last brings snows, and numbing sloth  
 Restores—then Hiems follows—and chill Algas  
 Smiting the chattering teeth. R. P.

Spence considers this passage to be one of the finest in Lucretius—at least it is one of those on which the reputation of Lucretius as a poet is founded. But in truth it is to lessen this reputation, to take it entirely away, when you say, 'The whole description seems to me to have been copied from some ancient procession of the Deities of the several seasons and their attendants'; and why? 'because', says the Englishman, 'such processions of their Deities in general were as common among the Romans of old, as those in honour of their saints are in the same country to this day. All the expressions used by Lucretius come in very aptly if applied to a procession' (*Polym. Dial.* 12, p. 192); admirable reasons! and how much there is to allege against the last. The very epithets which the poet bestows upon his abstract personages

(*Calor aridus—Ceres pulverulenta—Voluturnus altitonans—fulmine pollens Auster—Algas dentibus crepitans*), demonstrate that they derive their existence from the poet and not the artist, who would have described them very differently. Spence, moreover, appears to have taken this idea of a procession from Abraham Preigern, who, in his remarks upon the passage of the poet, says: *Ordo est quasi Pompae cujusdam Ver et Venus, Zephyrus et Flora, &c.* But there even Spence should let the matter rest. The poet leads on the seasons as it were in a procession. That is right. But he has learnt so to lead them from a procession—that is very absurd.

<sup>11</sup> *Aeneid*, viii, 725; Polymetis, *Dial.* xiv, p. 230.

<sup>12</sup> In various passages of his *Travels*, and of his *Discourse on Ancient Coins*.

## CHAPTER VIII

<sup>1</sup> Polymetis, *Dial.*, ix, p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> *Metamorph.*, l. iv. 19, 20:

Tu puer aeternus, tu formosissimus alto  
Conspiceris caelo: tibi quum, etc. R. P.

<sup>3</sup> Begeri, *Thes. Brandenburg.* v. 3, 242. Begerus, an archaeologist born at Heidelberg in 1653, died at Berlin 1705, librarian to Frederic William, Elector of Brandenburg. Among his other publications was *Thesaurus ex thesauro selectus seu Gemmae*, 1685. R. P.

<sup>4</sup> Polymetis, *Dial.*, vi, p. 63.

<sup>5</sup> Valerius Flaccus. His only extant work is the *Argonautica*, on the Argonautic expedition; it is unfinished. He was a friend of Martial, and is referred to by Quintilian. R. P.

<sup>6</sup> Polymetis, *Dial.*, xx, p. 311: 'Scarce anything can be good in a poetical description, which would appear absurd if represented in a statue or picture'.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.* p. 74. In the text Lessing does not cite the exact words of Spence, though professing to do so; they are: 'And I believe', Spence says, 'there is not any

description of it to be found in any of the Roman poets before those of the third age, in which Valerius Flaccus and Statius have drawn two very terrible pictures of her'. *Argon.*, ii. 106; *Theb.*, 5, 69. R. P.

<sup>8</sup> Stolen from Virgil's Dido,

maculisque trementes  
interfusa genas, etc. *Aen.* iv. R. P.

<sup>9</sup> *Argonaut*, lib. ii. 102-106. The preceding lines are :

Contra Veneris stat frigida semper  
Ara loco : meritas postquam Dea conjugis aras  
Horruit, et tacitae Martem tenuere catenae.  
Quocirca struit illa nefas, Lemnoque merenti  
Exitium furiale movet. R. P.

<sup>10</sup> *Thebaid.*, lib. v. 61-64 :

From Paphos, where a hundred altars smoke,  
And love-sick votaries her aid invoke,  
Careless of dress and ornaments she moves,  
And leaves behind her cestus and her doves  
Far other flames than those of love she bears  
And high in air the torch of discord rears,—  
Soon as the fiend-engender'd serpents roam,  
Diffusing terrors o'er each wrangling dome. Lewis. R. P.

## CHAPTER IX

<sup>1</sup> Ἔτεκεν δ', ἀνίκα Μοῖραι τέλεσαν ταυρόκερων θεῶν,  
κ.τ.λ. *Eur. Bacch.* 90. R. P.

<sup>2</sup> Valerius Flaccus, lib. ii. *Argonaut*, v. 265-273 :

Serta patri, juvenisque comam vestesque Lyaei  
Induit, et medium curru locat; astraque circum  
Tympanaque et plenas tacita fornidine cistas.  
Ipsa sinus hederisque ligat famularibus artum;  
Pampineamque quatit ventosae lectibus hastam  
Respicens; tenet virides velatus habenas  
Ut pater, et nives tumeant ut cornua mitra.  
Et sacer ut Bacchum referat scyphus.

The word *tumeant* in the penultimate line seems, moreover, to show that the horns of Bacchus were not made so small as Spence imagines.

<sup>3</sup> The so-called Bacchus in the Medici Gardens at Rome (Montfaucon, *Suppl. aux Ant.* t. i. p. 254) has little horns



sprouting out from his forehead ; but there are connoisseurs who, on this very account, consider that he is a faun. In fact, these natural horns are a disgrace to the figure of man, and only become creatures who occupy a middle place between man and beasts. Moreover, the attitude, the joyous glance at the grapes held over him, is more befitting a companion of the god of wine than the god himself. I remember what Clemens Alexandrinus says of Alexander the Great (*Protrept.* p. 48, edit. Pott.): ἐβούλετο δὲ καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος Ἀμμωνος υἱὸς εἶναι δοκεῖν, καὶ κερασφόρος ἀναπλάττεσθαι πρὸς τῶν ἀγαλματοποιῶν, τὸ καλὸν ἀνθρώπου ὑβρίσαι σπεύδων κέρατι. It was the express command of Alexander that the statuarist should represent him with horns: he was quite content that his manly beauty should be disfigured with horns, if people would only believe that his origin was divine.

<sup>4</sup> The history of the horns ascribed to Moses is curious. 'Cumque descenderet Moyses de Monte Sinaï tenebat duas tabulas testimonii et ignorabat quod cornuta esset facies sua ex consortio sermonis Domini' (*Exod.* xxxiv. 29). So the Vulgate, and the version of Aquila; but, in accordance with all the other versions, our Bible reads, 'Moses wist not that the skin of his face *shone*', etc., i. e. 'emitted rays'. Nevertheless, the 'horned' version has been repeated on coins and paintings (Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, tit. 'Horn'), and is adopted by Michael Angelo, who naturally followed the Vulgate in his famous statue of Moses in San Pietro in Vincoli at Rome (Lanzi *Storia della Pitt.* i. 110: Vasari—though stilted and ridiculous—*Vita*, etc., *Vita di M. B.* vol. x. 64, 65). 'Questi, è Mosè: ben mel diceva il folto Onor del mento, e 'l doppio ruggio in fronte', says Zappi. Jeremy Taylor adopts the literal meaning, 'But as when the sun approaches towards the gates of the morning, he first opens a little eye of heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to a cock, and calls up the lark to Matins; and by-and-by gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, thrusting out golden horns like those which decked the brows of Moses, when he was forced to wear a veil, because himself had seen the face of God'; *Holy Dying*, chap. i. sect. 3. The notions of strength and honour connected with the 'horn' are frequent in Holy Writ, and probably travelled from the East to Rome;

'tauriformis Aufidus', Hor. *Od.* iv. 14-25. ὁ ταυρόμορφον ὕμνα Κηφισοῦ πατρὸς, Eur. *Ἰών*, 1260. R. P.

<sup>5</sup> In a former remark which I made, that the ancient artists did not sculpture Furies, it had not escaped me that the Furies had more than one temple, which certainly were not without statues. In the one at Cerynea, Pausanias found some of wood,—they were neither large nor otherwise remarkable. It appeared that the art which these did not display was visible in the images of the priestesses, which were in the vestibule of the Temple,—which were of stone, and of far finer workmanship (Pausanias, *Achae.* cap. xxv. 587, ed. Kuhn). Nor had I forgotten that it was believed that their heads were to be seen on an *Abraxas*, which Chiffletius had made known, and on a lamp made by Licetus (*Dissert. sur les Furies* par Bannier, *Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscript.* t. v. p. 48). Nor was I ignorant of the urns of Etrurian workmanship by Gorius (Tab. 151, *Musei Etrusci*), on which Orestes and Pylades appeared attacked by two Furies with torches. But I was speaking of works of art, from the category of which I thought all these would be excluded. And even if the latter could not so well be excluded as the others, the fact from another point of view served rather to strengthen than to oppose my opinion; for however little the Etruscan artists especially worked for the production of the beautiful, they nevertheless appeared to have portrayed the Furies not so much by horrible features as by the treatment of them and their *attributa*. They thrust their torches into the very eyes of Pylades and Orestes with so tranquil a countenance that they seem as if they only wished to frighten them in jest. It is only from their fright, and by no means from the figures of the Furies themselves, that we can infer how terrible their appearance was to Orestes and Pylades. They are Furies and yet not Furies. They perform the office of Furies, but not with that representation of fierceness and wrath which we are accustomed to associate with their name,—not with a brow which, as Catullus says, *expirantis praeporiat pectoris iras*. But lately Herr Winkelmann thought that he had found upon a cornelian in the cabinet of Herr Stoss (*Bibliot. der G. sch. Wiss.*, v. 30) a Fury rushing with dishevelled hair with a dagger in her hand. Hagedorn, on the strength of this, advises artists to make

use of this discovery, and to represent Furies in their pictures (*Betrachtungen über die Malerey*, 222); but Winkelmann himself has since thrown doubt upon this discovery, because he cannot find that the ancients ever armed the Furies with daggers instead of torches (*Descript. des Pierres gravées*, p. 84). Doubtless, therefore, he does not recognise as Furies the figures upon the coins of the cities of Lyrba and Massaura, which Spahnheim considers as such (*Les Césars de Julien*, p. 44), but as a Hecate Triformis, for otherwise here would be a Fury with a dagger in each hand, and it is curious that this one also appears with uncovered and dishevelled hair, whereas, in the other cases, they are covered with a veil. But assuming Winkelmann's first conjecture to be right, it would apply to this engraved stone as well as to the Etruscan Urn; unless, owing to the fineness of the work, the features were undistinguishable. Besides, all engraved stones generally may, on account of their use as seals, be considered to belong to an allegorical language, and the figures on them are more frequently arbitrary symbols, according to the fancy of the owner, than the voluntary work of the Artist.

<sup>6</sup> Polymetis, *Dial.* vii. p. 81.

<sup>7</sup> *Fast.*, vi. 295-8:

Esse diu stultus Vestae simulacra putavi:  
Mox didici curvo nulla subesse tholo.  
Ignis inextinctus templo celatur in illo  
Effigiem nullam Vesta, nec ignis habent.

Ovid speaks only of the worship of Vesta in Rome, only of the temple which Numa himself had built for her, and of which he had a little before said (259, 60):

Regis opus placidi, quo non metuentius ullum  
Numinis ingenium terra Sabina tulit.

<sup>8</sup> *Fast.*, iii. 45, 6:

Sylvia fit mater: Vestae simulacra feruntur  
Virgineas oculis opposuisse manus.

In this way Spence ought to have compared Ovid with himself. The poet is speaking of different times. Here, of the time before Numa, there, of the time after him. During the former she was worshipped in Italy under a

personal representation, as she had been in Troy, from whence Aeneas had introduced her worship:

manibus vittas: Vestamque potentem  
Aeternumque adytis effert penetralibus ignem,

says Virgil of the ghost of Hector after it has counselled Aeneas to take flight. Here the eternal fire of Vesta is expressly distinguished from Vesta herself or her image. Spence cannot have read the Roman poets with sufficient care for his purpose, since this passage has escaped him.

<sup>9</sup> Lipsius, *de Vestâ et Vestalibus*, cap. 13. Lipsius, Justus, born 1547, published *variae lectiones* on some of the Latin authors. Professor at Leyden and Louvain. Died 1606. R. P.

<sup>10</sup> Pausanias, *Corinth.*, cap. xxxv, 198, edit. Kuth. Pausanias, lived in the time of the Antonines, author of the *Itinerary of Greece*, "Ἑλλάδος περιήγησις. When he visited Greece the country was still rich in memorials of art. He describes among others the works of Polygnotus at Delphi, the painting in the Poecile at Athens, and the Jupiter of Phidias in Elis. R. P.

<sup>11</sup> Idem, *Attic.*, cap. xviii, 41; Polyb. *Hist.*, l. xvi, § 11.

<sup>12</sup> Plinius, lib. xxxvi, sect. 4. *Scopas fecit*—'Vestam sedentem laudatam in Servilianis hortis'. Lipsius must have had this passage in his thoughts when he (*de Vestâ*, cap. 3) wrote, '*Plinius Vestam sedentem effingi solitam ostendit a stabilitate*'. But what Pliny says of a single work of Scopas must not be taken for a generally received characteristic. He himself remarks that in the coins Vesta appears as often standing as sitting. But he thereby corrects not Pliny, but his own false conception.

<sup>13</sup> Codinus, Georgius, surnamed Curopalates, lived during the latter part of the Byzantine Empire; died probably after the taking of Constantinople, A.D. 1453. He wrote a treatise, as became a *Curopalates*, on the Officers of the Palace of Constantinople, and on the Offices of the Principal Church. His Greek is said to be barbarous (Smith's *Dict.*). He also wrote the work referred to in the text. H. P.

*Excerpta ex libro Chronico de Originib. Constant.* edit. Venet. 12: τὴν γῆν λέγουσιν Ἑστίαν, καὶ πλάττουσιν αὐτὴν γυναικᾶ, τέμνοντες βαστάζουσιν, ἐπειδὴ τοὺς ἀνέμους ἢ γῆ ὑφ'

ἐαυτὴν συγκλείει. Suidas following him, or both following some older author, says under the word 'Ἑστία as follows: 'The earth is represented under the name of Vesta as a woman bearing a Tympanum, in which she holds the winds enclosed'. The reason is rather absurd: it would have sounded better to have said that the Tympanum was given to her because the ancients partly believed that her figure resembled it. σχῆμα αὐτῆς τυμπανοειδὲς εἶναι, Plutarch, *de placitis Philos.*, c. 10 id: de facie in orb. Luna. But it is possible that Codinus was mistaken in the figure or the name, or both. He knew perhaps no better name for what he saw Vesta carry than a Tympanum; or he might have heard it called a Tympanum and he could think of no other instrument than what we call a kettle-drum. But Tympana were also a kind of wheel. 'Hinc radios trivere rotis, hinc tympana plaustris agricolae', Virg. *Georg.*, ii, 444, and what we see borne by Fabretti's Vesta (*ad tabulam Iliadis*, p. 334) seems to be very like such a wheel, though this learned man takes it for a hand-mill.

## CHAPTER X

- <sup>1</sup> Polym. *Dial.* 8, 91.
- <sup>2</sup> Statius, *Theb.* viii, 551.
- <sup>3</sup> Polym. *Dial.* x, 137-139.

Εἰς ἄγαλμα Νεμέσεως.

Ἡ Νέμεσις προλέγει τῷ πῆχει, τῷ τε χαλινῷ,  
μητ' ἄμετρόν τι ποιεῖν, μητ' ἀχάλινα λέγειν.

*On a statue of Nemesis.*

With rule and bridle Nemesis should stand  
To chide unbridled tongue, unruly hand. R. P.

<sup>6</sup> In the picture which Horace draws of Necessity, and which is perhaps the richest in attributes of any to be found among the old poets—

Te semper antelt saeva Necessitas  
Clavos trabales et cuneos manu  
Gestans ahenos: nec severus  
Uncus adest liquidumque plumbum,

in this picture the nails, the cramps, the molten lead, whether considered as means of strength in architecture, or as instruments of punishment, belong rather to the class of poetical than allegorical attributes. But as such they are too much heaped up one on the other, and the passage is one of the coldest in Horace. Sanadon says: 'J'ose dire que ce tableau pris dans le détail serait plus beau sur la toile que dans une ode héroïque. Je ne puis souffrir cet attirail patibulaire de clous de coins, de crocs, et de plomb fondu. J'ai cru en devoir décharger la traduction en substituant les idées générales aux idées singulières. C'est dommage que le poëte ait eu besoin de ce correctif' (a piece of French pertness I think. R. P.). The feeling of Sanadon was fine and just, but he does not put it on the right ground. It is not because the attributes made use of are an *attirail patibulaire* (for he might have adopted the other interpretation, and have changed this apparatus of the gallows into the firmest support of architecture), but because all these *attributs* are properly addressed to the eye; and all ideas which ought to be obtained through the eye, if they are acquired through the ear, require a greater effort, and are susceptible of less perspicuity. The continuation of this strophe reminds me by the way of two mistakes of Spence, which do not produce the most favourable opinion of the accuracy with which he has weighed the passages cited by him from the ancient poets. He is speaking of the figure under which the Romans represented—Fidelity or Honesty. 'The Romans' (says he) 'called her *Fides*; and when they called her *sola Fides*, seem to mean the same as we do by the words "downright honesty". She is represented with an erect, open air; and with nothing but a thin robe on, so fine that one might see through it. Horace, therefore, calls her thin-draped in one of his odes, and transparent in another'. In this short passage there are not less than three gross faults. First, it is false that *sola* was a peculiar epithet applied by the Romans to the goddess *Fides*. In both the passages of Livy, which he cites in proof of this (l. 1. 21; l. 11. 3), it means nothing more than it always means—the exclusion of everything else. In the first passage the word *solâ* appears suspicious to the critics, and is supposed to have been introduced into the text through a fault of the

copyist, occasioned by the *solenne*, which stands next to it. In the second passage Livy is speaking not of Honesty, but of Innocence, of not being amenable to punishment, *Innocentia*. In the next place Horace, in one of his Odes (the 35th of the 1st book, mentioned above), has bestowed upon *Fides* the epithet 'thin-robed'—

Te Spes et albo rara Fides colit  
Velata panno.

*Rarus*, it is true, means also thin; but here it simply means 'what is seldom met with'; and the epithet is applied to *Fides* herself, and not to her robe. Spence would have been right if the poet had said *raro Fides velata panno*. Thirdly, Horace in another place is said to call Faith or Honesty 'transparent': and thereby to mean what we in our ordinary professions of friendship are wont to say, 'You can see my heart'; and this passage is said to be found in the 18th Ode of the 1st book:—

Arcanique Fides prodiga, pellucidior vitro.

But how can any one suffer himself to be misled by a mere word? Does then *Fides arcana prodiga* mean Fidelity? Does it not rather mean Infidelity? It is of this that Horace speaks, and not of Fidelity, when he says that she is as transparent as glass, because she reveals to every eye the secrets entrusted to her.

## CHAPTER XI

<sup>1</sup> Apollo delivers over the cleansed and embalmed body of Sarpedon to Death and Sleep, that they may bring him to his native country (*Il.*, π 681, 2).

Πέμπε δέ μιν πομπόισιν ἄμα κραιπνοῖσι φέρεσθαι  
Ἵππῳ καὶ θανάτῳ διδύμασιν.

Caylus recommends this idea to the painter, but he adds: 'Il est facheux qu'Homère ne nous ait rien laissé sur les attributs qu'on donnait de son temps au Sommeil; nous ne connoissons, pour caractériser ce Dieu, que son action même, et nous le couronnons de pavots. Ces idées sont modernes; la première est d'un médiocre service, mais elle ne peut être employée dans le cas présent où même les

fleurs me paroissent déplacées, sur tout pour une figure qui groupe avec la mort'. (*Tableaux tirés de l'Iliade, de l'Odyssée d'Homère et de l'Énéide de Virgile, avec des observations générales sur le Costume, à Paris, 1757, 8.*) This is to require of Homer one of those petty ornaments which directly conflict with his great manner. The most ingenious *attributa* which he could have given to Sleep would not have characterised him nearly so perfectly, would not have awakened in us nearly so lively an image, as the single trait by which he makes him the twin brother of Death. Let the artist seek to express this, and he may dispense with all the other *attributa*. The ancient writers have, in fact, represented Death and Sleep with that resemblance between them which we naturally expect in twins. On a chest of cedar wood in the Temple of Juno both rested like children in the arms of Night; only the one was white and the other was black: the one slept, the other seemed to sleep; both had their feet crossed, for so I prefer to translate the words of Pausanias (*Eliae.*, cap. xviii, p. 422, ed. Kuh.), *ἀμφοτέρους διαστραμμένους τοὺς πόδας*, rather than with 'crooked feet', or as Gedoyn has rendered it in his own language, *les pieds contrefaits*. What can crooked feet express here? Feet crossed over one another is the usual attitude of sleepers, and sleep in Maffei (*Raccol.*, Pl. 151) lies in either attitude. Modern artists have entirely departed from this resemblance, which Sleep and Death had in the treatment of the ancients; and it has become common to represent Death as a skeleton, or at the most as a skeleton clothed in skin. Caylus was bound before all things to advise the artist whether he ought to follow the old or the new usage. Yet he appears to declare himself in favour of the moderns, for he treats Death as a figure with which another crowned with flowers would not group well. Had he ever thought how unsuitable this modern idea of Death would be in an Homeric picture? and how could the disgust arising from it have failed to shock him? I cannot persuade myself that the little metal figure in the Ducal Gallery at Florence, which represents a recumbent skeleton lying with one arm upon a funeral urn (Spence, *Polym.*, tab. xli), can be a real antique; at least, it cannot represent Death generally because the ancients represent it differently. Even their



poets have never spoken of him under this repulsive form.

Lessing himself wrote an ingenious treatise on the manner in which the ancients represented Death, entitled, *Wie die Alten den Tod gebildet haben*. R. P.

<sup>2</sup> So he is called by Lucian, *μᾶλλον δὲ τὸν ἀριστοτῶν γραφῆων Ὅμηρον . . . δεδέγμεθα*; and after speaking of Homer's power of painting beauty, *ταῦτα μὲν οὖν πλαστῶν καὶ γραφῆων καὶ ποιητῶν παῖδες ἐργάζονται*. *Εἰκόνες*, s. 8, p. 10, Rip. ed. So Cicero, speaking of Homer's blindness and its alleviations,

At ejus picturam non poesim, videmus. Quae regio, quae ora, qui locus Graeciae, quae species formae, quae pugna, quae acies, quod remigium, qui motus hominum, qui ferarum, non ita *expictus* est, ut, quae ipse non viderit, nos ut videremus, effocerit. *Tusc. Qu.*, l. v, 39. R. P.

<sup>3</sup> *Betrachtungen über die Malerey*. S. 159, u. f.

<sup>4</sup> *Ad Pisones*, 128-30:

And thou  
Should'st rather write in acts the tale of Troy,  
Than be the first to sing of things unknown,  
And all as yet unsung.

Cf. Harris, *Discourse on Music, Painting and Poetry*, pp. 64, 5, and note written before the Laocoon. R. P.

<sup>5</sup> Invention in painting does not imply the invention of the subject, for that is commonly supplied by the poet or historian: with respect to the choice, no subject can be proper that is not generally interesting—it ought to be either some eminent instance of heroic action or heroic suffering. There must be something either in the action, or in the object in which men are universally concerned, and which powerfully strikes upon the public sympathy. SIR J. REYNOLDS, 4th Disc., 1, 345; see *Life and Writings of Fuseli*, Third and Fourth Lecture on Invention. R. P.

<sup>6</sup> Lib. xxxv, sect. 36, 700.

<sup>7</sup> Richardson appeals to this work, when he wishes to illustrate the rule that in a picture the attention of the beholder should not be drawn away from the principal figure by any thing, how excellent soever in itself. Protogenes, in his famous picture (not as Lessing cites the passage), of Ialysus, but of the Satyr leaning against a pedestal, on which a partridge was perching, had painted the partridge so exquisitely well that it seemed a living creature, and was admired by all Greece; but

that being most taken notice of, he defaced it entirely. (*Theory of Painting—of Invention*, p. 32.) Richardson has made a mistake. This picture was not in the Ialysus, but in another picture by Protogenes, which is called the resting or weary Satyr, Σάτυρος ἀναπαυόμενος. I should scarcely have adverted to these errors, arising from a misunderstanding of the passage in Pliny, were they not also found in Meursius (*Rhodi*, lib. i, cap. 14, p. 38): 'In eadem tabula, sc. in qua Ialysus, Satyrus erat, quem dicebant Anapavomenon, tibiā tenens'. The same is to be found even in Herr Winkelmann (*Von der Nachahm. der Gr. W. in der Mahl. und Bildh.*, s. 56). Strabo is the real voucher of this little story about the partridge, and this expressly distinguishes between the Ialysus and the Satyr leaning on the pillar on which the partridge sat (lib. xiv, p. 750; edit. Xyl.; ed. 1707; Amstel. Wolters, lxiv, 964, 965; trans.). Meursius and Richardson and Winkelmann have misunderstood the passage in Pliny, because they did not remark that he is speaking of two distinct pictures; the one upon whose account Demetrius would not vanquish the city, because he did not choose to attack the place where it stood, and the other which Protogenes painted during this siege. The former was Ialysus, and the latter the Satyr.

I must observe, in vindication of Richardson, I find no mention of Ialysus by him, in the passage cited above. I think Lessing must have been deceived by a French translation, though in the passage from Richardson, as given by Lessing, the name of Ialysus appears. R. P.

The passage in Strabo is remarkable: Καὶ αἱ τοῦ Πρωτογένους γραφαί· ὁ, τ' Ἰάλυσος, καὶ ὁ Σάτυρος παρεστὼς στύλῳ· ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ στύλῳ πέρδιξ ἐφειστήκει· πρὸς δὲ οὕτως ἐκκεχῆνασιν, ὥς ἔοικεν οἱ ἄνθρωποι, νεωστὶ ἀνακειμένου τοῦ πίνακος, ὥστ' ἐκείνον ἐθαύμαζον, ὁ δὲ Σάτυρος παρεωρᾶτο, καὶ τοὶ σφόδρα κατωρθωμένοι. ἐξέπληττον δ' ἔτι μᾶλλον οἱ περδικοτρόφοι κομίζοντες τοὺς τιθασσοὺς, καὶ τιθέντες· καταντικρὺ ἐφθέγγοντο γὰρ πρὸς τὴν γραφὴν οἱ πέρδικες, καὶ ὠχλαγώγουν. Ὅρων δὲ ὁ Πρωτογένης τὸ ἔργον κέρεργον γεγονὸς, ἐδεήθη τῶν τοῦ τεμένους προεστώτων ἐπιστρέψαι παρελθόντα ἐξαλείψαι τὸν ὕρην, καὶ ἐποίησε. Strabo, t. 2, l. iv, p. 965.

And the pictures by Protogenes, Ialysus and Satyrus standing by a column. On the column a partridge at one time stood; at which, it appears, when the picture was first hung up, people were so amazed,

that they kept gazing at it, while Satyrus, though wonderfully finished, was scarcely glanced at. And the people were still more astonished by the partridge-fanciers, who used to bring tame birds and put them opposite; for the tame partridges would call to the picture, to the delight of the people. Protogenes however, seeing that the chief subject of the picture had become an accessory, asked the keepers of the sacred place to let him enter and paint out the bird, which he did.

See also Cic. *in Verrem*, l. iv, c. 60. 'What should we think', he asks, 'of a man who took away from the Tarentinos, "Satyrum qui apud illos in aede Vestae est?"' Strabo lived in the reign of Augustus, and the earlier part of the reign of Tiberius. R. P.

## CHAPTER XII

<sup>1</sup> *Iliad*, § 385.

<sup>2</sup> Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts;  
Into a thousand parts divide one man, and make  
Imaginary puissance, etc. *Henry V.* Chorus. R. P.

<sup>3</sup> But she retiring with strong grasp upheaved  
A rugged stone, black, ponderous, from the plain,  
A land mark fixed by men of ancient times.  
COWPER'S *H.*, xxi, 474-6. R. P.

<sup>4</sup> Quintus Calaber, in his twelfth book (v. 158, 185) has imitated this invisible battle of the gods with the very plain intention of surpassing his model. For instance, it appears that the Grammarians thought it very unbecoming that a god should be thrown upon the earth by a stone. It is true indeed that he makes the gods hurl great portions of cliffs at each other, which they have torn from Mount Ida; but these cliffs are shattered to pieces against the immortal limbs of the gods, and are crumbled like sand among them:

Οἱ δὲ κολῶνας  
Χερσὶν ἀπορρήξαντες ἀπ' οὐδεὸς Ἰδαίου  
Βάλλον ἐπ' ἀλλήλους· αἱ δὲ ψαμάθοισι δμοίαι  
'Ρεῖα διεσκιδναντὸ θεῶν περὶ δ' ἄσχετα γυῖα  
'Ρηγνύμενα διὰ τότθα.

A subtlety which destroys the principal matter. It elevates our idea of the bodies of the gods, and makes the weapons which they use against each other ridiculous. When the gods throw stones at each other, either these

stones must injure the gods, or we imagine that we see only naughty boys who are pelting each other with lumps of earth; and so it remains that old Homer was much the wisest, and all the blame which cold critics threw on him, all the strife and emulation of inferior geniuses, only served to set his wisdom in the best possible light. At the same time I will not deny that, in the imitation of Quintus, there are some very good passages which are his own. Nevertheless, they are traits which would not so well become the modest grandeur of Homer, as do honour to the fiery vehemence of a modern poet. That the scream of the gods which sounded high up to heaven, and low down into the abyss, which shook the mountain, and the city and the fleet, should not have been heard by men appears to me to be a very significant poetical artifice. The scream was greater than could be apprehended by the feeble organs of human hearing.

\* With respect to strength and speed, no man who has only read Homer cursorily once will dispute this assertion. One may less easily remember the instances from which it appears that the poet has also endowed his gods with a corporeal strength far beyond all natural proportions. Besides the passage I have adduced, in which Mars thrown to the ground covers seven acres, I refer him to the helmet of Minerva, *Κυνήην ἑκατόν πόλειων προλήεσσ' ἀραρνίαν*, under which as many warriors as a hundred cities could send to battle could be concealed; also to the stride of Neptune (*Iliad*, N. 20), but especially to the lines in the description of the Shield in which Mars and Minerva lead the troops of the besieged city (*Iliad*, Σ 516-19):—

Ἦρχε δ' ἄρα σφιν Ἄρης καὶ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη  
 Ἀμφω χρυσεῖω, χρύσεια δὲ εἵματα ἔσθην  
 Καλὰ καὶ μεγάλω σὺν τεύχεσιν, ὥστε θεῶ περ,  
 Ἀμφὶς ἀριζήλω λαοὶ δ' ὑπολίζοντες ἦσαν.

Even the interpreters of Homer, old as well as new, do not appear to have always borne sufficiently in mind this marvellous stature of his gods, this appears from the mitigating explanations which they thought themselves obliged to give as to the helmet of Minerva (see the edition of Homer by Clarke and Ernesti upon the passage referred to). But we lose a very great deal of the sublime if we

think of the Homeric gods as being always of the ordinary stature in which we are accustomed to see them in the company of mortals on canvass. It is indeed not permitted to painting to represent them in those gigantic proportions, though sculpture may do this in some degree; and I am convinced that the old masters borrowed from Homer not only the general form of their gods, but also the colossal form which they so often represented in their statues (Herod. l. 11, p. 130, ed. Wessel). I reserve for another place observations on this colossal character, and why in sculpture it produces so great an effect, and in painting none at all.

<sup>6</sup> *Iliad*, Γ 381.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.*, Ε 23.

<sup>8</sup> *Ib.*, Υ 444.

<sup>9</sup> *Ib.*, Υ 446.

<sup>10</sup> *Ib.*, Υ 321.

<sup>11</sup> It is true that Homer veils from time to time his divinities in a cloud, but only when he does not want them to be seen by other divinities, e. g., *Iliad*, Ε 282, where Juno and Sleep, *ἥρα ἑσσαμένω*, fly to Ida, where it is the greatest anxiety of the crafty goddess not to be discovered by Venus, who, upon the pretext of a very different expedition, had lent her girdle to Juno. In the very same book (333) a golden cloud is necessary to cover the enamoured Jupiter and his wife in order to overcome her chaste resistance.

Πῶς κ' εἶσι, εἴ τις νῶϊ θεῶν αἰεγενετῶν  
Εὔδοντ' ἀθρήσειε.

She is not afraid of being seen by men, but by the gods; and if Homer makes Jupiter say, a few lines lower down

"Ἥρη, μήτε θεῶν τό γε δεῖδιθι, μήτε τιν' ἀνδρῶν  
Ὅψεσθαι τοῖόν τοι ἐγὼ νέφος ἀμφικαλύψω  
Χρύσειον

that does not mean that she had need of this cloud, but only that, in this cloud, she would be as invisible to the gods as she always was to men. And so when Minerva puts on the helmet of Pluto (*Iliad*, Ε 384, 5), which has the same effect of concealment as the cloud, it is not that she may not be seen by the Trojans, who either do not see her at all, or as disguised as Sthenelus, but only that Mars may not recognise her.

<sup>12</sup> The classical reader will recollect the admirable lines in which Venus reveals to her son the enmity of the gods to Troy :

Adspice: namque omnem, quae nunc obducta tuenti  
Mortales hebetat visus tibi, et humida circum  
Caligat, nubem eripiam . . .  
Apparent dirae facies inimicae Trojae  
Numina magna Deum. *Aen.* li. 604-623.

Now cast your eyes around, while I dissolve  
The mists and fogs that mortal eyes involve ;  
Purge from your sight the dross, and make you see  
The shape of each avenging Deity.  
. . . dreadful sounds I hear,  
And the dire forms of hostile gods appear. DRYDEN.

Sophocles makes Minerva darken the eyes of Ajax that he may not see Ulysses.

Ἐγὼ σκοτώσω βλέφαρα καὶ δεδορκότα. *Aias*, 85. R. P.

## CHAPTER XIII

<sup>1</sup> *Iliad*, A 44-53. *Tableaux tirés de l'Iliade*, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Thus he pray'd, and Phoebus heard him pray ;  
And vex'd at heart, down from the tops of steep heaven stoop'd ; his  
bow  
And quiver cover'd round, his hands did on his shoulders throw ;  
And of the angry Deity the arrows as he mov'd  
Rattled about him. Like the night he rang'd the host, and rov'd  
(Apart the fleet set) terribly : with his hard-loosing hand  
His silver bow twang'd ; and his shafts did first the mules command  
And swift hounds ; then the Greeks themselves his deadly arrows  
shot.  
The fires of death went never out : nine days his shafts flew hot  
About the army. CHAPMAN. R. P.

<sup>3</sup> *Iliad*, Δ 1-4. *Tableaux tirés de l'Iliade*, p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Within the fair pav'd court of Jove, he and the gods conferr'd  
About the sad events of Troy : amongst whom minister'd  
Bless'd Hebe, nectar. As they sat and did Troy's tow'rs behold,  
They drank and pledg'd each other round in full-crown'd cups of gold.  
CHAPMAN. R. P.

## CHAPTER XIV

<sup>1</sup> *Tableaux tirés de l'Illiade*, Avert. p. v : On est toujours convenu, que plus un Poëme fournissait d'images et d'actions, plus il avait de supériorité en Poësie. Cette reflexion m'avait conduit à penser que le calcul des différens Tableaux, qu'offrant les Poëmes, pouvait servir à comparer le mérite respectif des Poëmes et des Poëtes. Le nombre et le genre des Tableaux que présentent ces grands ouvrages, auroient été une espèce de pierre de touche, ou plutôt une balance certaine du mérite de ces Poëmes et du génie de leurs Auteurs.

<sup>2</sup> So much the rather thou celestial light  
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers  
Irradiate. MILTON, *Paradise Lost*, bk. 3. R. P.

<sup>3</sup> Crabbe's admirable poem of the *Lover's Journey* affords an illustration of the position in the text :

On rode Orlando, counting all the while  
The miles he passed, and every coming mile ;  
Like all attracted things, he quicker flies,  
The place approaching where th' attraction lies ;  
When next appear'd a *dam*—so call the place—  
Where lies a road confined in narrow space ;  
A work of labour, for on either side  
Is level fen, a prospect wild and wide,  
With dikes on either hand by ocean's self-supplied ;  
Far on the right the distant sea is seen,  
And salt the springs that feed the marsh between ;  
Beneath an ancient bridge, the straiten'd flood  
Rolls through its sloping banks of slimy mud ;  
Near it a sunken boat resists the tide,  
That frets and hurries to th' opposing side ;  
The rushes sharp, that on the borders grow,  
Bend their brown flow'rets to the stream below,  
Impure in all its course, in all its progress slow ;  
Here a grave Flora scarcely deigns to bloom,  
Nor wears a rosy blush, nor sheds perfume ;  
The few dull flowers that o'er the place are spread  
Partake the nature of their fenny bed ;  
Here on its wiry stem, in rigid bloom,  
Grows the salt lavender that lacks perfume ;  
Here the dwarf sallows creep, the septfoil harsh,  
And the soft slimy mallow of the marsh ;  
Low on the ear the distant billows sound,  
And just in view appears their stony bound ;  
No hedge nor tree conceals the glowing sun,  
Birds, save a wat'ry tribe, the district shun,  
Nor chirp among the reeds where bitter waters run.

'Various as beauteous, Nature, is thy face',  
Exclaim'd Orlando : 'all that grows has grace ;  
All are appropriate—bog, and marsh, and fen,  
Are only poor to undiscerning men

Here may the nice and curious eye explore  
 How Nature's hand adorns the rushy moor;  
 Here the rare moss in secret shade is found,  
 Here the sweet myrtle of the shaking ground;  
 Beauties are these that from the view retire,  
 But well repay th' attention they require.

*The Lover's Journey : Tale X.*

<sup>4</sup> What we call poetical pictures the Ancients called '*phantasies*', as we may remember in Longinus. And what we call the *Illusion*, the deceit of a picture, they called the '*energy*'. Plutarch tells us of somebody who said (*Erot.* t. ii. Edit. Henr. Steph. p. 1351), 'That poetical "*phantasies*", on account of their energy, were the dreams of waking men'.

I much wish that modern treatises on the art of poetry had made use of this term, and had altogether avoided the word picture. We should have been spared a number of half-true rules, whose principal foundation is the analogy of a term arbitrarily employed. No man would confine poetical '*phantasies*' within the limits of a material picture; but as soon as people begun to call '*phantasies*' poetical pictures the foundation of the error was laid.

Plutarch, *de Placitis Philosoph.*, has a short chapter on the difference between *phantasia*, *phantaston*, *phantasticum*, *phantasma* : *τινὶ διαφέρει, φαντασία, κ.τ.λ.*

Chrysippus says that these four things differ from each other. For *phantasia* is an affection of the mind, presenting with itself also that which has caused it. As when by the sense of sight we see whiteness, there is an affection of the mind engendered by the sight. And of this affection we can say that white underlies it, and so in like manner of things affecting us by the sense of touch and smell. This affection is called *phantasia*, from *phos* 'light': for as light shows itself, and the several things which are surrounded by it, so does *phantasia* present itself, and that which has caused it. R. P.

## CHAPTER XV

<sup>1</sup> *Iliad*, Δ 105 :—

Αὐτίκ' ἐσύλα τόξον ἐθήρουν . . .  
 Καὶ τὸ μὲν εὖ κατέθηκε ταυνοσάμενος, ποτὶ γαίρῃ  
 Ἀγκλίνας . . .  
 Αὐτὰρ ὁ σύλα πῶμα φαρέτρης ἐκ δ' ἔλετ' ἰὼν



Ἀβλήτα, πτερόεντα, μελαινέων ἔρμ' ὀδυνάων  
 Αἴψα δ' ἐπὶ νευρῇ κατεκόσμηι πικρὸν ὀϊστὸν,

Ἐλκε δ' ὁμοῦ γλυφίδας τε λαβὼν, καὶ νευῖρα βόεια.  
 Νευρὴν μὲν μαζῷ πέλασεν, τόξω δὲ σίδηρον.  
 Αὐτὰρ ἐπειδὴ κυκλοτερὲς μέγα τόξον ἔτεινεν,  
 Αἴγχε βιδὸς, νευρὴ δὲ μέγ' ἴαχεν, ἄλτο δ' ὀϊστὸς  
 Ὀξυβελῆς, καθ' ὁμίλον ἐπιπέσθαι μενεαίνων.

## CHAPTER XVI

<sup>1</sup> *Plurima sunt Homeri loca (says Bishop Copleston) quae in re navali fuse explicando immorantur: quando aut in mare deducitur navis aut velis sive remigio per fluctus agitur, aut ad terram appellitur: e quibus vero omnibus vix unum aut alterum invenias, qui rem ita exponat ut picturam efficiat, nisi singulos motus gestusque corporis fideliter ac nudo sermone referre, id demum sit pictorem agere. He cites *Odys.* Δ 577; *ib.*, 781. *Praelectiones Academicæ*, Præ. v, p. 66. R. P.*

<sup>2</sup> *Iliad*, E 722-731:

Her golden-bridled steeds  
 Then Saturn's daughter brought abroad; and Hebe, she proceeds,  
 T' address her chariot instantly; she gives it—either wheel  
 Beam'd with eight spokes of sounding brass; the axle-tree was steel,  
 The fell'ns incorruptible gold, their upper bands of brass,  
 Their matter most unvalued, their work of wondrous grace.  
 The naves in which the spokes were driven, were all with silver bound;  
 The chariot's seat, two hoops of gold and silver strength'ned round;  
 Edg'd with a gold and silver fringe; the beam that look'd before,  
 Was massy silver; on whose top, geres all of gold it wore,  
 And golden poitrils. CHAPMAN.

I am glad to find my preference for Chapman to Pope is in some degree supported by Mr Hallam: 'Chapman's translation with all its defects is often exceedingly Homeric, a praise which Pope himself seldom attained'. *Lit. of Eur.*, vol. ii, 131. R. P.

<sup>3</sup> *Iliad*, B 42-46:

The dream gone, his voice still murmured  
 About the king's ears: who sat up, put on him in his bed  
 His silken inner weed; fair, new, and then in haste arose;  
 Cast on his ample mantle, tied to his soft feet fair shoes;

His silver-hilted sword he hung about his shoulders, took  
His father's sceptre never stain'd ; which then abroad he shook.  
CHAPMAN. R. P.

<sup>4</sup> *Iliad*, B 101-108 :

Then stood divine Atrides up, and in his hand compress'd  
His sceptre, th' elaborate work of fiery Mulciber :  
Who gave it to Saturnian Jove ; Jove to his messenger ;  
His messenger, Argicides, to Pelops, skill'd in horse ;  
Pelops to Atreus, chief of men : he dying, gave it course  
To prince Thyestes, rich in herds ; Thyestes to the hand  
Of Agamemnon render'd it, and with it the command  
Of many isles, and Argos all. CHAPMAN. R. P.

<sup>5</sup> *Iliad*, A. 234-239 :

Yet I vow, and by a great oath swear,  
Even by this sceptre, that as this never again shall bear  
Green leaves or branches, nor increase with any growth his size ;  
Nor did since first it left the hills, and had his faculties  
And ornaments bereft with iron ; which now to other end  
Judges of Greece bear, and their laws, received from Jove, defend.  
CHAPMAN. R. P.

<sup>6</sup> *Iliad*, Δ 105-111 :

Who instantly drew forth a bow most admirably made  
Of th' antler of a jumping goat, bred in a steep up-land,  
Which archer-like (as long before he took his hidden stand  
The doom'd one skipping from a rock) into the breast he smote,  
And headlong felled him from his cliff. The forehead of the goat  
Held out a wondrous goodly palm, that sixteen branches brought,  
Of all of which (join'd) an useful bow a skilful bowyer wrought,  
Which piked and polished both the ends he hid with horns of gold.  
CHAPMAN. R. P.

## CHAPTER, XVII

<sup>1</sup> Sir W. Hamilton speaks of the three principal orders in which the imagination, fantasy, or fancy, represents ideas as—1, the Natural order ; 2, the Logical order ; 3, the Poetical order. 'Of the last', he says, 'it consists in seizing individual circumstances, and in grouping them in such a manner that the imagination shall represent them, so as they might be offered by the sense'. *Lectures on Metaphysics*, ii, 266, 7. R. P.

<sup>2</sup> The Alps, by HERR VON HALLER.

<sup>3</sup> Because these verses contain little more than a botanical catalogue of flowers in a particular place—  
*nam diversa penitus sint res totum dicere et omnia*

(says Copleston, *Praelect. Acad.*, 4, p. 55). You see and smell the flowers in Shakspeare.

With fairest flowers,  
Whilst summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,  
I'll sweeten thy sad grave : thou shalt not lack  
The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose ; nor  
The azur'd hare-bell, like thy veins ; no, nor  
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,  
Out-sweeten'd not thy breath.

*Cymbeline*, act iv, scene 1.

Here's flowers for you ;  
Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram ;  
The marigold that goes to bed with the sun,  
And with him rises weeping ; . . .  
Daffodils,  
That come before the swallow dares, and take  
The winds of March with beauty ; violets, dim,  
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,  
Or Cytherea's breath ; pale primroses,  
That die unmarried, ere they can behold  
Bright Phoebus in his strength, a malady  
Most incident to maids ; bold oxlips and  
The crown-imperial ; lilies of all kinds,  
The flower-de-luce being one.

*Winter's Tale*, act iv, scene 3.

<sup>4</sup> Breitingen's *Critische Dichtkunst*, Th. ii, s. 807.

<sup>5</sup> I could wish that Lessing had here referred to Du Bos' chapters on *Des Différens Genres de Poésie et de leur Caractère* (vol. i, s. viii : *Réflexions Critiques sur la Poésie et sur la Peinture*), and (s. ix.), 'Comment on rend les sujets *dogmatiques* intéressans', (p. 63) 'chaque genre (de Poésie) nous touche à proportion que l'objet le quel il est de son essence de peindre et d'imiter est capable de nous émouvoir. Voilà pourquoi le genre *Elégiaque* et le genre *Bucolique* ont plus d'attrait pour nous que le genre *Dogmatique*. . . . (p. 65) Quand Virgile composa ses *Géorgiques* qui sont on Poème dogmatique dont le titre nous promet des instructions sur l'agriculture et sur les occupations de la vie champêtre il eut attention à le remplir d'imitations faites d'après les objets qui nous auroient attachés dans la nature. Virgile ne s'est pas même contenté de ces images répandues avec un art infini dans tout l'ouvrage', etc. R. P.

<sup>6</sup> The mother cow must wear a lowering look,  
Sour-headed, strongly-neck'd to bear the yoke ;

**7**                                      Lofty-neck'd ;  
Sharp-headed, barrel-belly'd, broadly back'd,  
Brawny his chest and deep.

<sup>8</sup> *Georg.*, iii, 51 and 79.

<sup>10</sup> *De Art. Poet.*, 16.

That not in Fancy's mazo he wandered long,  
But stoop'd to Truth, and moraliz'd his song.

Who could take offence,  
While pure description held the place of Sense?

It is true that the poet, as a commentator, appears to have regarded the thing rather from its relation to morality than to art, but so much the better that it appears both from the one side and the other to be of no value.

<sup>12</sup> *Poétique Française*, t. ii, p. 501 :

J'écrivais ces réflexions avant que les essais des Allemands dans ce genre (l'Eloge) fussent connus parmi nous. Ils ont exécuté ce que j'avois conçu ; et s'ils parviennent à donner plus au moral et moins au détail des peintures physiques, ils excelleront dans ce genre, plus riche, plus vaste, plus fécond et infiniment plus naturel et plus moral que celui de la galanterie champêtre.

Marmontel, Jean François, French writer of Poems, Romances, and Criticisms ; born 1723, died 1799. His most successful work was *Les Contes Moraux*. R. P.

## CHAPTER XVIII

<sup>1</sup> Mazzuoli, Francesco, called also Parmegiano or Parmegianino. Pilkington says, 'He had a peculiar talent in giving beauty, elegance, grace, and sweetness to his features. He excelled in portrait as much as in his history . . . his outline is true and firm, and the light, easy flow of his draperies gives an inexpressible beauty to his picture'. In the well-known verses of Agostino Caracci, the young painter is told to acquire

Un po di grazia del Parmegianino.

Born at Parma 1503, died in 1540. R. P.

<sup>2</sup> Hogarth wisely told his story of the Marriage à la Mode in a succession of pictures. R. P.

<sup>3</sup> Comme le tableau qui représente une action, ne nous fait voir qu'un instant de sa durée, le Peintre ne sauroit atteindre au sublime que les choses qui ont précédé la situation présente, jettent quelquefois dans un sentiment ordinaire. Au contraire la Poésie nous décrit tous les incidents remarquables de l'action qu'elle traite, etc. Du Bos, i, 87 : *Réflexions Critiques sur la Poésie et sur la Peinture*. R. P.

<sup>4</sup> The art of disposing the foldings of the drapery makes a very considerable part of the painter's study. To make it merely natural is a mechanical operation to which neither genius nor taste are required : whereas it requires the nicest judgment to dispose the drapery so that the folds shall have an easy communication, and gracefully follow each other with such natural negligence as to look like the effect of chance, and at the same time show the figure under it to the utmost advantage. SIR J. REYNOLDS' *4th Disc.*, i, 350. R. P.

<sup>5</sup> *Gedanken über die Schönheit und über den Geschmack in der Malerei*, s. 69.

<sup>6</sup> Compare Du Bos, i. s. xxv. 312; *De la Mécanique de la Poésie*, etc. R. P.

<sup>7</sup> See Du Bos, ib. 327; La construction Latine permet de renverser l'ordre naturel des mots et de les transposer jusqu'à ce qu'on ait rencontré un arrangement dans lequel ils se prononcent sans peine et rendent même une mélodie agréable, etc.; an advantage of Classical Languages not mentioned here. R. P.

<sup>8</sup> Dionysius Halicarnass. in *Vita Homeri* apud Th. Gale. in *Opusc. Mythol.*, p. 491.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, where he was a teacher of Rhetoric; born between B.C. 78 and 54; generally called Dionysius by the ancients. He lived at Rome for the greater part of his life; was a very successful and voluminous author on rhetoric, criticism, and history. His great work was on the History of Rome *Ἀρχαιολογία*, nine of the twenty books in which it is written we have complete. R. P.

<sup>9</sup> I find that Servius offers another excuse for Virgil. For Servius too has remarked the difference between the two shields: 'Sane interest inter hunc et Homeri clypeum; ille enim singula dum fiunt narrantur: hic vero perfecto opere nascuntur: nam et hic arma prius accipit Aeneas quam spectaret; ibi postquam omnia narrata sunt, sic a Thelide deferuntur ad Achillem' (*Od.* 625, l. viii. *Aen.*). And why this? 'because', says Servius, 'there were imaged upon the shield of Aeneas not merely the few events which the poet mentions, but

genus omne futuræ  
'Stirpis ab Ascanio pugnataque in ordine bella'.

How could it have been possible that, even taking into account the speed with which Vulcan is obliged to prepare the shield, the poet could have mentioned by name the long series of posterity, and have described in the order of time all the wars which they would wage? This is the meaning of the somewhat obscure words of Servius: 'opportune ergo Virgilius quia non videtur simul et narrationis celeritas potuisse connecti et opus jam velociter expediri ut ad versum posset occurrere'. For as Virgil could only bring forward a little of the 'non enarrabile texto clypei', so also he could not do this whilst Vulcan himself was working at it, but must wait till all was completed. I wish very much for Virgil's sake that this

reasoning of Servius was groundless ; my defence of him would be much more creditable. For what was the necessity of bringing the whole Roman history into the shield ? By a few pictures Homer made his shield an epitome of all that happens in the world. Does it not seem as if Virgil, seeing that he could not surpass the Greek in the design and execution of his pictures, tried at least to surpass him in the number of them ? and what could be more childish ?

Servius, Maurus or Marius Honoratus, a celebrated grammarian ; his great work a Commentary on Virgil, a contemporary of Macrobius, who refers to him in the *Saturnalia*, probably lived about the beginning of the fifth century. R. P.

De Quincey remarks on this passage :

In the three last sentences there is a false thought, unworthy of Lessing's acuteness. The vulgar conception of didactic poetry is, that the adjunct *didactic* expresses the primary function (or in logical phrase the *difference* of that class of poetry), as though the business were first of all to teach something, and secondly to convert this into poetry by some process of embellishment. But such a conception contains a *contradictio in adjecto*, and is in effect equivalent to demanding of a species that it shall forgo, or falsify, the distinctions which belong to it, in virtue of its genus. As a term of convenience *didactic* may serve to discriminate one class of poetry ; but didactic it cannot be in philosophic rigour without ceasing to be poetry. Indirectly, it is true, that a poet in the highest departments of his art may, and often does, communicate mere knowledge, but never as a direct purpose, unless by forgetting his proper duty.

He then suggests various mean and domestic occupations which might be so treated by the poet as to affect us with pleasure, and he proceeds :

Now Virgil, in his ideal of a cow, and the description of her meritorious points, is nearly upon as low ground as any that is here suggested. And this it is which has misled Lessing. Treating a mean subject, Virgil must (he concludes) have adapted his description to some purpose of utility : for, if his purpose had been beauty, why lavish his power upon so poor an occasion, since the course of his subject did not in this instance oblige him to any detail ? But if this construction of the case were a just one, and that Virgil really *had* framed his descriptions merely as a guide to the practical judgment, this passage would certainly deserve to be transferred from its present station in the *Georgics* to the *Grazier's Pocket-Book*, as being (what Lessing in effect represents it to be) a plain *bond fide* account of a Smithfield prize cow. But though the object here described is one which is seldom regarded in any other light than that of utility, and on that account is of necessity a mean one, yet the question still remains, in what spirit, and for what purpose, Virgil has described this mean object ? For meanness

and deformity even, as was said before, have their modes of beauty. Now, there are four reasons which might justify Virgil in his description, and not one of them having any reference to the plain prosaic purpose which Lessing ascribes to him. He may have described the cow—

I. As a *difficult* and intractable subject, by way of a *bravura* or passage of execution. To describe well is not easy; and in one class of didactic poems, of which there are several, both in Latin, English, and French, viz., those which treat of the mechanic parts of the critical art, the chief stress of the merit is thrown upon the skill with which thoughts, not naturally susceptible of elegance, or even of a metrical expression, are modulated into the proper key for the style and ornaments of verse. This is not a very elevated form of the poetic art, and too much like rope-dancing. But to aim humbly is better than to aim awry, as Virgil would have done if interpreted under Lessing's idea of didactic poetry.

II. As a *familiar* subject. Such subjects, even though positively disgusting, have a fascinating interest when reproduced by the painter or the poet; upon what principle has possibly not been sufficiently explained. Even transient notices of objects and actions, which are too indifferent to the mind to be more than half consciously perceived, become highly interesting when detained and reanimated, and the full light of the consciousness thrown powerfully upon them by a picturesque description. A street in London, with its usual furniture of causeway, gutter, lamp-posts, etc., is viewed with little interest; but exhibited in a scene at Drury Lane, according to the style of its execution, becomes very impressive.

As to Lessing's objection about the difficulty of collecting the successive parts of a description into the unity of a co-existence, that difficulty does not exist to those who are familiar with the subject of the description, and at any rate is not peculiar to this case.

III. As an *ideal*. Virgil's cow is an ideal in her class. Now every ideal, or maximum perfection (as the old metaphysicians called it) in natural objects, necessarily expresses the dark power of nature, which is at the root of all things under one of its infinite manifestations in the most impressive way; that which elsewhere exists by parts and fractions dispersed amongst the species and in tendency, here exists as a whole, and in consummation. A Pandora who should be furnished for all the functions of her nature in a luxury of perfection, even though it were possible that the ideal beauty should be disjoined from this ideal organization, would be regarded with the deepest interest. Such a Pandora in *her* species, or an approximation to one, is the cow of Virgil, and he is warranted by this consideration in describing her without the meanness of a didactic purpose.

IV. As a *beautiful* object. In those objects which are referred wholly to a purpose of utility, as a kitchen-garden for instance, utility becomes the law of their beauty. With regard to the cow in particular, which is referred to no variety of purpose, as the horse or the dog, the external structure will express more absolutely and unequivocally the degree in which the purposes of her species are accomplished; and her beauty will be a more determinate subject for the judgment than where the animal structure is referred to a multitude of separate ends incapable of co-existing. Describing in this view, however, it will be said that Virgil presupposes in his reader some knowledge of the subject; for the description will be a dead letter to him, unless it awakens and brightens some previous notices of his own. I answer,



that with regard to all the common and familiar appearances of nature, a poet is entitled to postulate some knowledge in his readers : and the fact is, that he has not postulated so much as Shakspeare in his fine description of the hounds of Theseus in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, or of the horse of Arcite<sup>1</sup> : and Shakspeare, it will not be pretended, had any didactic purpose in those passages.

This is my correction applied to the common idea of didactic poetry ; and I have thought it right to connect it with the error of so distinguished a critic as Lessing. If he is right in his construction of Virgil's purpose that would prove only that, in this instance, Virgil was wrong.

<sup>10</sup> *Aeneid*, viii. 447-54 :

Their artful hands a shield prepare.  
One stirs the fire, and one the bellows blows ;  
The hissing steel is in the smithy drowned ;  
The grot with beaten anvils groans around.  
By turns their arms advance in equal time,  
By turns their hands descend and hammers chime ;  
They turn the glowing mass with crooked tongs.

DRYDEN. R. P.

## CHAPTER XIX

<sup>1</sup> Scaliger (the elder), Julius Caesar, critic, poet, physician, philosopher ; born in Italy, educated in Germany, lived in France ; born 1484, died 1558. His son was Justus Josephus, born 1540, died 1609, an accomplished classical scholar. R. P.

<sup>2</sup> Perrault, Charles, rather a voluminous French writer. Amongst other works he wrote a poem on painting, became a member of the Académie Française in 1671, to the prosperity of which he largely contributed ; born 1628, died 1703. R. P.

<sup>3</sup> Terrasson, Jean, a French *littérateur* of some celebrity in his day, a Professor of Greek and Latin at the Collège de France ; more esteemed for his knowledge than his taste. Wrote a criticism on the *Iliad*, and was vehemently attacked by Madame Dacier. He was born 1670, and died 1750. R. P.

<sup>1</sup> In the *Two Noble Kinsmen* [Beaumont and Fletcher]. The first act has been often and justly attributed to Shakspeare ; but the last act is no less indisputably his, and in his very finest style. (I doubt this very much. R. P.)

<sup>4</sup> Dacier, Anne Lefèvre ; born 1654, died 1720 ; a French lady acquainted with, but not deeply read in, the classical authors of Greece and Rome, and employed as an assistant by the editors of the classics in *usum Delphini*. She translated several classical authors not perfectly understood by her. Her translation of Homer was the work which pleased her countrymen most ; but it was never esteemed by real scholars, and had many of the defects of the French school. R. P.

<sup>5</sup> 'Scuto ejus, in quo amazonum praelium caelavit in intumescente ambitu parmae : ejusdem concava parte Deorum et Gigantum dimicationem'. PLINIUS, l. xxxvi. 5. 40.

<sup>6</sup> *Iliad*,  $\Sigma$  497-508 :—

Otherwhere

A solemn court of law was kept, where throngs of people were :  
The case in question was a fine imposed on one that slew  
The friend of him that follow'd it, and for the fine did sue,  
Which th' other pleaded he had paid. The adverse part denied,  
And openly affirm'd he had no penny satisfied.  
Both put it to arbitrement ; the people cried 'twas best  
For both parts, and th' assistants too gave their dooms like the rest.  
The heralds made the people peace : the seniors then did bear  
The voiceful heralds' sceptres ; sate within a sacred sphere,  
On polish'd stones ; and gave by turns their sentence. In the court  
Two talents of gold were cast, for him that judg'd in justest sort.

CHAPMAN. R. P.

<sup>7</sup> Boivin, Louis, a learned Frenchman, born 1649, died 1724, appears to have been considered a great authority by the Académie des Inscriptions, of which he became a member in 1701. R. P.

<sup>8</sup> 'On it he wrought', 'on it he formed', 'on it he placed', 'on it Vulcan variously fashioned'. The first begins with line 483, and goes down to 489 ; the second, from 490 to 509 ; the third, 510 to 540 ; the fourth, 541 to 549 ; the fifth, 550 to 560 ; the sixth, 561 to 572 ; the seventh, 573 to 586 ; the eighth, 587 to 589 ; the ninth, 590 to 605 ; the tenth, 606 to 608. The third picture is the only one without the introductory words. It is, however, clear enough from the second, *ἐν δὲ δῶα ποίησε πόλεις*, and from the reason of the thing itself, that it must be a distinct picture.

<sup>9</sup> *Phocis*, cap. 25. 31. Vide ante as to the itinerary of Pausanias. R. P.

<sup>10</sup> In order to show that I have not spoken too strongly about Pope, I will refer in his own language to the beginning of the passage which I am about to quote: 'That Homer was no stranger to aerial perspective appears in his expressly marking the distance from object to object; he tells us', etc. I say that Pope has here made an entirely wrong use of the words *aerial perspective* (*perspective aérienne*), for it has nothing to do with the lessening of size in proportion to distance, but merely expresses the faintness and change of colour according to the condition of the air or medium through which it is seen. Any one who could make such a blunder as this may well have been ignorant of the whole matter.

In 1755, Lessing had written, in conjunction with Mendelssohn, an essay, entitled, '*Pope ein Metaphysiker!*' The irony of his comparison between Pope's positions as philosophical and Leibnitz's positions as poetical is commented on by Danzel, i, 278, 9. Lessing's *Leben und Werke*. R. P.

<sup>11</sup> Sophocles, Aristotle remarks, introduced three actors on the stage and scene-painting, *τρεις δὲ καὶ σκηνογραφίαν Σοφοκλῆς: περὶ Ποιητ.* i, p. 14. Sophocles, who carried Greek drama to its perfection, was born at Colonus, which he immortalised in his last and perhaps greatest drama, B.C. 496, and died in his 90th year. R. P.

<sup>12</sup> *Betracht über die Malerei*, s. 185.

Written in the year 1763. Lessing's loyalty to Winkelmann is very remarkable; it has been referred to in the Preface, and will be mentioned again. R. P.

## CHAPTER XX

- <sup>1</sup> She was a very beautiful woman, with lovely eyebrows and complexion,  
With beautiful cheeks and face, ox-eyes, snow-white skin;  
Dark (or round) eyed, tender, a grove full of charms,  
White armed, delicate breathing, beauty undisguised;  
The complexion fair, the cheek rosy,  
The countenance pleasing, the eye beautiful.  
Inartificial loveliness undyed, natural;

A rose-coloured fruit tinged her whiteness,  
 As if one should dye ivory with splendid purple.  
 Long-necked, dazzling white, whence she was often called—  
 Swan-born lovely Helen.

It seems like a bad translation of a Persian poem, or Chinese novel. R. P.

<sup>2</sup> Lessing's English translators have not, I think, quite understood these words. Constantinus Manasses lived in the middle of the twelfth century, in the reign of Manuel Comnenus. He wrote a sort of Chronicle of the World, *Σύνopsis ιστορικῇ*, in a kind of irregular verse, called by later writers *versus politici*, which was in fact rhythmical prose. Smith's *Biog. Diet.* 'Manasses', but see also Du Cange, title *politici versus*; the origin of 'politici' is very doubtful. Perhaps Cicero's account is correct: 'Nam cum sic hominis natura generata sit, ut habeat quiddam innatum quasi civile atque *populare*, quod Graeci *πολιτικὸν* vocant', etc. *De Fin.* v. 23.

For a time these 'versus politici' seem to have been very popular. It is remarkable that Meursius dedicates his edition of this work of Constantinus Manasses to Gustavus Adolphus. R. P.

<sup>3</sup> Her matchless person every charm combined  
 Form'd in th' idea of a painter's mind.  
 Bound in a knot behind, her ringlets roll'd  
 Down her soft neck, and seem'd like waving gold.  
 Her cheeks with lilies mix the blushing rose:  
 Her forehead high, like polish'd iv'ry shows.  
 Beneath two arching brows with splendor shone  
 Her sparkling eyes, each eye a radiant sun!  
 Here artful glances, winning locks appear,  
 And wanton Cupid lies in ambush here:  
 'Tis hence he bends his bow, he points his dart,  
 'Tis hence he steals th' unwary gazer's heart.  
 Her nose so truly shap'd, the faultless frame  
 Not envy can deface, nor art can blame.  
 Her lips beneath, with pure vermilion bright,  
 Present two rows of orient pearl to sight:  
 Here those soft words are form'd whose power detains  
 Th' obdurate soul in love's alluring chains;  
 And here the smiles receive their infant birth,  
 Whose sweets reveal a paradise on earth.  
 Her neck and breast were white as falling snows,  
 Round was her neck and full her bosom rose.  
 Firm as the budding fruit with gentle swell  
 Each lovely breast alternate rose and fell.  
 Thus on the margin of the peaceful seas  
 The waters heave before the fanning breeze.

Her arms well turn'd; and of a dazzling hue,  
 With perfect beauty gratified the view.  
 Her taper fingers long and fair to see  
 From every rising vein and swelling free;  
 And from her vest below, with new delight,  
 Her slender foot attracts the lover's sight.  
 Not Argus' self her other charms could spy,  
 So closely veiled from every longing eye.  
 Yet may we judge the graces she revealed,  
 Surpassed not those her modest garb concealed  
 Which strive in vain from fancy's eye to hide  
 Each angel charm that seemed to heaven allied.

HOOKE'S Transl. of *Ariosto*. R. P.

<sup>4</sup> The hasty multitude  
 Admiring enter'd, and the work some praise,  
 And some the architect. *Par. Lost*, I. 730. R. P.

<sup>5</sup> *Dialogo della Pittura intitolato l' Aretino*, Firenze 1735, p. 178: 'Se vogliono i Pittori senza fatica trovare un perfetto esempio di bella Donna, leggano quelle Stanze dell' Ariosto, nelle quali egli descrive mirabilmente le bellezze della Fata Alcina: e vedranno parimente, quanto i buoni Poeti siano ancora essi Pittori'.

Dolce Luigi, an Italian littérateur. Tiraboschi says he was historian, grammarian, rhetorician, philosopher, poet. He was also editor, translator, collector of memoirs; and among his more important works was *Dialogo*, referred to above. Born at Venice 1508, died 1568. R. P.

<sup>6</sup> Me' for (meglio). R. P.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*: 'Ecco, che quanto alla proportione, l' ingeniosissimo Ariosto assegna la migliore, che sappiano formar le mani de' più eccellenti Pittori, usando questa voce industri, per dinotar la diligenza, che conviene al buono artefice'.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 182: 'Qui l' Ariosto colorisce, e in questo suo colorire dimostra essere un Titiano'.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 180: 'Poteva l' Ariosto nella guisa, che ha detto chioma bionda, dir chioma d' oro: ma gli parve forse, che havrebbe havuto troppo del Poetico. Da che si può ritrar, che l' Pittore dee imitar l' oro, e non metterlo (come fanno i Miniatori) nelle sue Pitture, in modo, che si possa dire, que' capelli non sono d' oro ma par che risplendano, come l' oro'. What Dolce in the following passage takes from Athenæus is remarkable, only it is not accurate. I will speak of this by and bye.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p. 182: 'Il naso, che discende giù, havendo peravventura la considerazione a quelle forme de' nasi, che si veggono ne' ritratti delle belle Romane antiche'.

<sup>11</sup> *Aeneid*, iv. 136:

A flowered cymar with golden fringes she wore,  
And at her back a golden quiver bore;  
Her flowing hair a golden caul restrains,  
A golden clasp the Tyrian robe sustains. DRYDEN. R. P.

<sup>12</sup> *Odes* xxviii, xxix.

<sup>13</sup> *Eikônes*, § 3, t. 11, p. 461, ed. Reitz. Lucian, a Syrian by birth, probably lived A.D. 120 to the end of the century; a very voluminous and licentious Greek writer upon a variety of subjects, but he is best known and most read as the author of Dialogues. The *eikônes* or imagines, (a sort of picture gallery), can hardly be classed under this head.

Walter Scott, in his description of the first appearance of the Lady of the Lake, happily blends the ideas of the poet and the sculptor:

The maiden paused, as if again  
She thought to catch the distant strain.  
With head up-raised, and look intent,  
And eye and ear attentive bent,  
And locks flung back, and lips apart,  
Like monument of Grecian art;  
In listening mood, she seemed to stand,  
The guardian Nalad of the strand.  
And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace  
A Nymph, a Nalad, or a Grace,  
Of finer form or lovelier face!

*Lady of the Lake*, Canto i. xvii. xviii. R. P.

## CHAPTER XXI

<sup>1</sup> *Iliad*, Γ 121.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* 319.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* 156-8.

These wise and almost withered men, found this heat in their years  
That they were forced (tho' whispering) to say: what man can blame  
The Greeks and Trojans to endure for so admir'd a dame,  
So many miseries and so long? in her sweet countenance shine  
Looks like the goddesses, etc. CHAPMAN. R. P.

<sup>4</sup> Let us remember also the meeting of Ulysses and Nausicaa, and the exquisite manner in which her beauty is painted by its effect on Ulysses, who, doubting whether she be immortal or mortal, compares her first to Diana, and then to the Palm-tree, which grew up in perfect symmetry by the altar of the Delian Apollo; and dwells upon the happiness which such a creature of beauty must shed over parents, family, and bridegroom.

Οὐ γὰρ πω τοιοῦτον ἴδον βροτὸν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν,  
 Οὐτ' ἄνδρ' οὔτε γυναῖκα· σέβας μ' ἔχει εἰσορόωντα.  
 Δῆλαφ δὴ ποτὲ τοῖον Ἀπόλλωνος παρὰ βωμῷ  
 Φοίνικος νέον ἔρνος ἀνερχόμενον ἐνόησα· κ.τ.λ.

*Odys.* Z 160-163. R. P.

<sup>5</sup> Et vera incessu patuit Dea. *Act.* i. 408.  
 Milton's Eve.

Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,  
 In every gesture dignity and love.

*Par. Lost*, viii. 488, 9. R. P.

## CHAPTER XXII

<sup>1</sup> Zeuxis, the most renowned of ancient painters, who excelled all his contemporaries but Parrhasius, appears to have flourished about B.C. 424.

<sup>2</sup> Val. Max. lib. iii, cap. 7. Valerius Maximus, sometimes with the prænomen of Marcus, a great compiler of historical anecdotes—*De Factis Dictisque Memorabilibus*, lib. ix.—referred to by the elder Pliny, Plutarch, and Aulus Gellius. Wrote on a variety of miscellaneous subjects. He lived in the time of the first Roman Emperors, but of his personal history very little, if anything, is known. Dion. Halycar. *Art. Rhet.* cap. 12.  
*περί λόγων ἐξετάσεις.* R. P.

<sup>3</sup> 'Gierigen Blicke' is the expression in the original; it means something more than 'eager', as it is usually translated

You would have thought the very windows spake,  
 So many greedy looks of young and old;  
 Thro' casements darted their desiring eyes  
 Upon his visage. *Rich. II.* act v, sc. 1. R. P.

<sup>4</sup> And yet (tho' never so divine)  
Before we boast, unjustly still, of her enforced prize,  
And justly suffer for her sake with all our progenies  
Labour and ruin, let her go: the profit of our land  
Must pass the beauty. CHAPMAN. R. P.

<sup>5</sup> Which stirred a sweet desire in her; to serve the which she hied,  
Shadow'd her graces with white veils, etc.

CHAPMAN. R. P.

<sup>6</sup> This remark is happily inapplicable to England. Homer has always been taught in her Public Schools, especially at Westminster. Witness also the Grenville Homer, the translations of Chapman, Pope, Cowper, Sotheby, Lord Derby, and Mr Gladstone's more recent and well-known works. In France Homer has never been much read or much understood, and I am afraid the same remark applies to Italy and Spain. R. P.

<sup>7</sup> Fabricii *Biblioth. Graec.* lib. ii, cap. 6, p. 345. Fabricius Joannes Albertus, born at Leipsig 1667. Professor at Hamburg, where he spent his life; the author of many learned works, the principal being the *Bibliotheca Graeca*, containing notices of the Greek authors down to those who flourished at the close of the Byzantine Empire. He died in 1736. R. P.

<sup>8</sup> Plinius says of Apelles (lib. xxxv, cap. 10): 'Fecit et Dianam sacrificantium virginum choro mixtam: quibus vicisse Homeri versus videtur idipsum describentis'. Nothing can be truer than this panegyric. Beautiful nymphs round a beautiful goddess, who towers above them all with her majestic forehead, is certainly a design fitter for painting than poetry—only the *sacrificantium* is to me very doubtful. What has the goddess to do with sacrificing virgins? and is this the occupation which Homer furnishes to the companions of Diana? Surely not. They wander with her through mountains and woods; they hunt, they sport, they dance (*Odyss.* Z 102-106).

Οἷη δ' Ἀρτεμις εἰσι κατ' οὐρεὺς ἰοχέαιρα,  
ἥ κατὰ Τηόγγετον περιμήκετον, ἥ Ἐρύμανθον,  
Τερπομένη κάπροισι καὶ ὠκείῃς ἐλάφοισι  
τῇ δέ θ' ἕμα Νύμφαι, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο,  
Ἀγρονόμοι παῖζουσιν.

[Pliny would not have written of 'sacrificantium', but of  
T



'venantium'; perhaps 'sylvia vagantium', an alteration which would give about the same number of letters: 'saltantium' would come nearest to *παλαιοὶ*, and Virgil, in his imitation of this passage, makes Diana dance with her nymphs (*Aeneid*, i. 497-98):—

Qualis in Eurotae ripis aut per juga Cyntae  
Exercet Diana choros.

Spence has a strange idea on this head. 'This Diana (says he) both in the picture and in the descriptions, was the Diana Venatrix, though she was not represented either by Virgil, or Apelles, or Homer, as hunting with her nymphs, but as employed with them in that sort of dances, which of old were regarded as very solemn acts of devotion'. He adds the observation: 'The expression of *παλαιοὶ*, used by Homer on this occasion, is scarce proper for hunting, as that of "choros exercere" in Virgil should be understood of the religious dances of old, because dancing, in the old Roman idea of it, was indecent, even for men, in public; unless it were the sort of dances used in honour of Mars, or Bacchus, or some other of their gods'. Spence chooses to understand by the word those solemn dances which the ancients considered part of the acts of worship. 'And Pliny', he says, 'uses the word "sacrificare" in that sense. It is in consequence of this that Pliny, in speaking of Diana's nymphs on this very occasion, uses the word "sacrificare" of them; which quite determines these dances of theirs to have been of the religious kind'. He forgets that in Virgil, Diana herself dances, 'exercet Diana choros'. If this dance were a religious dance, in whose honour did Diana dance? in her own? or in honour of another deity? Both are absurd; and if the old Romans considered dancing as unbecoming a serious man, must on that account their poets transplant the gravity of their people into the manners of their gods, which manners were altogether different from those described by the ancient Greek poet? Horace says of Venus (*Od.* iv.)

Jam Cytherea choros ducit Venus, imminente Luna  
Junctaeque Nymphis Gratiae decentes  
Alternò terram quatiant pede.

Was this a holy religious dance? but I spend too many words on such whims.

<sup>9</sup> *Iliad*, A 528. Valerius Maximus, lib. iii. cap. 7.

He said : and his black eyebrows bent ; 'above his deathless head  
Th' ambrosian curls flow'd : great heaven shook.

CHAPMAN. R. P.

<sup>10</sup> Plinius, lib. xi, cap. 37.

<sup>11</sup> *Idem*, lib. xxxiv, cap. 8 :

Ipsæ tamen corporum tenas curiosus animi sensus non expressisse videtur, capillum quoque et pubem non emendatius fecisse, quam rudis antiquitas instituisset.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* : 'Hic primus nervos et venas expressit ; capillumque diligentius'.

<sup>13</sup> *Analysis of Beauty*, chapter xi. on Proportion, p. 149. William Hogarth, born 1697 or 1698, died 1764. In 1733 his genius began to be generally recognised. His series of pictures in the *Marriage à la mode*, now in our Gallery, contributed greatly to his reputation. In his work on the *Analysis of Beauty*, Hogarth maintained that the curve was the line of beauty. Lessing reviewed a translation of this work by C. Mylius. Berl. 1754. R. P.

<sup>14</sup> *Iliad*, Γ 210-11.

## CHAPTER XXIII

<sup>1</sup> *Philos. Schriften des Herrn Moses Mendelssohn*, t. ii, s. 23. Moses Mendelssohn, born at Dessau 1729, the son of a Jew, a schoolmaster, the friend of Lessing and Nicolai. To Lessing's friendship for him we owe the play of *Nathan der Weise*, mentioned in the Preface. He was a voluminous writer, and his writings produced a considerable effect upon German literature. R. P.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarchus, *Quomodo adolescens Poetas audire debeat*, ed. Reiske ; vol. vi. p. 61-2 : ἤττον γὰρ ὥς εἶδῃσι τι περὶ τούτων προσέξουσιν τοῖς ποιηταῖς, ἐν οἷς τοῖς φιλοσόφοις ἰαγνῶντας ὁρῶσιν. ἔτι δὲ μᾶλλον ἐπιστήσωμεν αὐτὸν, ἅμα τῷ προσάγειν τοῖς ποιήμασιν ὑπογράφοντες τὴν ποιητικὴν, ὅτι μιμητικὴ τέχνη καὶ δύναμις ἐστὶν ἀντίστροφος τῇ ζωγραφίᾳ, καὶ μὴ μόνον ἐκείνο τὸ θρυλλούμενον ἀκηκοὺς ἔστω, ζωγραφίαν μὲν εἶναι φθεγγομένην τὴν ποίησιν, ποίησιν δὲ σιγῶσαν τὴν ζωγραφίαν· ἀλλὰ πρὸς τούτῳ διδάσκωμεν αὐτὸν, ὅτι γεγραμμένην σαύραν, ἢ πῶλον, ἢ Θερσίτου πρόσωπον, ἰδόντες ἡδόμεθα καὶ θαυμάσο-

μεν, οὐχ ὡς καλόν, ἀλλ' ὡς ὁμοιον. οὐσία μὲν γὰρ οὐ δύναται καλόν γενέσθαι τὸ αἰσχροῦ· ἡ δὲ μίμησις, ἂν τε περὶ φαῦλον, ἂν τε περὶ χρηστὸν ἐφίκεται τῆς ὁμοιότητος, ἐπαινεῖται. καὶ τοῦναντίον ἂν αἰσχροῦ σώματος εἰκόνα καλὴν παρασχῇ, τὸ πρέπον καὶ τὸ εἰκὸς οὐκ ἀπέδωκεν.

Still less will they pay heed to poets as knowing anything about matters in which they see philosophers have grown dizzy.

We shall render him still more careful if at the same time as we introduce him to poems, we describe to him what poetry is—that it is an imitative art and faculty correlative to painting; and not let him only hear that hackneyed saying that poetry is speaking painting, and painting is silent poetry, but teach him too that we take pleasure and admire when we see in a painting a lizard or an ape, or the face of Thersites, not for its beauty, but for its likeness. For ugly things cannot in their real existence become beautiful; but an imitation, whether it be in a bad or good thing, if it attains to likeness, is praised; while contrariwise an imitation, which would give a lovely image of an ugly form, would not represent what was suitable or fitting.

<sup>3</sup> The fault must not be *destructive*. *De Poetica*, c. v. vide Note 5, ch. xxiv.

<sup>4</sup> *Philos Schriften des Herrn Moses Mendelssohn*, t. ii, s. 23.

<sup>5</sup> Paralipom. l. i. 720–775.

<sup>6</sup> One touch of Nature makes the whole world kin.  
*Tr. and Cressida*, act iii, sc. 3.

Homo sum humanum nihil a me alienum puto.  
TERENT. *Heaut.* i. 1–25. R. P.

<sup>7</sup> *King Lear*, act i, sc. 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Richard III.* act i, sc. 1.

## CHAPTER XXIV

<sup>1</sup> *Briefe die neueste Literatur betreffend*, t. v, s. 102. These were published at Berlin 1759–1765, under the superintendence of Lessing's friend, F. Nicolai. Those signed F 11 and G are by Lessing, the rest chiefly by Abbt, Mendelssohn, and Resewitz. See also Preface to this work. R. P.

<sup>2</sup> *De Poetica*, cap. iv, 5.

<sup>3</sup> At a subsequent period (1769, Berlin) Lessing wrote an essay on the way the ancients represented death, *Wie die Alten den Tod gebildet haben*, Berlin, 1769. It was illustrated with engravings. (Gurauer, i, 37-40, 303.) Lessing protested against the introduction of the skeleton which Caylus and Winkelmann seem to have thought was according to the usage of the ancients, though Homer makes Apollo give the cleansed and perfumed body of Sarpedon to the twins Death and Sleep. (*Ἰπνὸς καὶ Θάνατος διδυμοῖσιν*, II. II 672.) The proper emblems, according to Lessing, were Death and his brother Sleep, and both geniuses with an inverted torch. So Schiller in his *Stifter Griechenlands*

Damals trat kein grässliches Gerippe  
Vor das Bett der Sterbenden. Ein Kuss  
Nahm das Leben von der Lippe;  
Seine Fackel senkt der Genius.

No ghastly skeleton at the bed of death  
Scared the departing soul—no dismal cry—  
One kiss alone received life's latest breath,  
Genius with torch reversed stood silent by. R. P.

<sup>4</sup> Klotzii *Epistolae Homericae*, p. 23, et seq. Christian Adolph Klotz, a Privy Councillor, in Prussia; Professor of Philosophy and Eloquence at the University of Halle, died in the year 1771, before he had completed his thirty-second year. He seems to have been a superficial scholar, at one time much over-estimated—*acta litteraria* 'gelehrten Zeitungen' at Halle. After the date of the publication of the *Laocoon*, about the year 1768, he made a literary attack on Lessing's dear friend Nicolai, and afterwards assailed some of Lessing's positions in the *Laocoon*. Klotz published about this time his treatise, *über die Ahnenbilder der alten Römer*. In a criticism upon this Lessing began that series of attacks which demolished Klotz's literary reputation. A full account of this will be found in Gurauer's *Lessings Leben und Werke*, II. 2, 9 kap. Briefe des Herrn Lessing und des Herrn Klotz betreffend des ersteren Laocoon und des letzteren Werk von den geschnittenen Steinen, Leips. 1768. R. P.

<sup>5</sup> There are three passages in Aristotle upon the curious subject of our alleged liking to see the imitation of even an ugly thing. The first is in his *Poetics*, cap. 4, § 6, the

passage here referred to : Τό τε γὰρ μιμεῖσθαι σύμθυτον τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐκ παίδων ἐστὶ, καὶ τούτῳ διαφέρουσι τῶν ἄλλων ζῴων ὅτι μιμητικώτατόν ἐστι καὶ τὰς μαθήσεις ποιεῖται διὰ μίμησεως τὰς πρώτας, καὶ τὸ χαίρειν τοῖς μίμημασι πάντας. Σημεῖον δὲ τούτου τὸ συμβαίνειν ἐπὶ τῶν ἔργων ἃ γὰρ αὐτὰ λυπηρῶς δρῶμεν, τούτων τὰς εἰκόνας τὰς μάλιστα ἡκριβωμένας χαίρομεν θεωροῦντες, οἷον θηρίων τε μορφὰς τῶν ἀτιμοτάτων καὶ νεκρῶν. Αἴτιον δὲ καὶ τούτου, ὅτι μανθάνειν οὐ μόνον τοῖς φιλοσόφοις ἥδιστον ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὁμοίως· ἀλλ' ἐπὶ βραχὺ κοινωνοῦσιν αὐτοῦ. Διὰ γὰρ τοῦτο χαίρουσι τὰς εἰκόνας δρῶντες, ὅτι συμβαίνει θεωροῦντας μανθάνειν καὶ συλλογίζεσθαι τί ἕκαστον, οἷον ὅτι οὗτος ἐκεῖνος, ἐπεὶ ἐὰν μὴ τύχη προεωρακώς, οὐ διὰ μίμημα ποιήσει τὴν ἰδούην ἀλλὰ διὰ τὴν ἀπεργασίαν ἢ τὴν χροιάν ἢ διὰ τοιαύτην τινὰ ἄλλην αἰτίαν.

This is fairly translated by Twining, p. 107, v. (Aristotle's *Treatise on Poetry*, by Daniel Twining, 2nd ed. 1812):

To imitate is instinctive in man from his infancy. By this he is distinguished from other animals, that he is, of all, the most imitative, and through this instinct receives his earliest education. All men likewise naturally receive pleasure from imitation. This is evident from what we experience in viewing the works of imitative art; for in them, we contemplate with pleasure, and with the more pleasure, the more exactly they are imitated, such objects as, if real, we could not see without pain; as, the figures of the meanest and most disgusting animals, dead bodies and the like. And the reason of this is, that to *learn* is a natural pleasure, not confined to philosophers, but common to all men; with this difference only, that the multitude partake of it in a more transient and compendious manner. Hence the pleasure they receive from a picture: in viewing it they *learn*, they *infer*, they *discover*, what every object is: that *this*, for instance, is such a particular man, etc. For if we suppose the object represented to be something which the spectator had never seen, his pleasure, in that case, will not arise from the *imitation*, but from the workmanship, the colours, or some such cause.

The second passage is a little farther on in the same work: Ἡ δὲ κωμῳδία ἐστὶν, ὥσπερ. εἶπομεν, μίμησις φαυλοτέρων μὲν, οὐ μέντοι κατὰ πᾶσαν κακίαν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ αἰσχροῦ ἐστὶ τὸ γελοῖον μόνον. τὸ γὰρ γελοῖόν ἐστιν ἀμάρτημά τι καὶ αἰσχος ἀνώδυρον καὶ αὐ.φθαρτικόν, οἷον εὐθὺς τὸ γελοῖον πρόσωπον αἰσχρόν τι καὶ διεστραμμένον ἀνευ ὁδύνης.

Thus translated by Twining

Comedy, as was said before, is an imitation of *bad characters*; bad, not with respect to every sort of vice, but to the *ridiculous* only, as being a species of turpitude or deformity; since it may be defined to

be a fault or deformity of such a sort as is neither painful nor destructive. A ridiculous face, for example, is something ugly and distorted, but not so as to cause pain.

The third and, I think, the most remarkable passage is in his *Rhetoric*; 'Ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸ μανθάνειν τε ἡδὺν καὶ τὸ θαυμάζειν, καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀνάγκη ἡδέα εἶναι οἷον τό τε μεμιμημένον, ὥσπερ γραφικὴ καὶ ἀνδριαντοποιία καὶ ποιητικὴ, καὶ πᾶν δ' ἂν εὖ μεμιμημένον ᾖ, κἂν ᾖ μὴ ἡδὺν αὐτὸ τὸ μεμιμημένον· οὐ γὰρ ἐπὶ τούτῳ χαίρει, ἀλλὰ συλλογισμός ἐστιν ὅτι τοῦτο ἐκεῖνο, ὥστε μανθάνειν τι συμβαίνει. *Rhet.* l. 1, 11, 23.

But since learning and admiration and such things are pleasant, so must also be pleasant both a work of imitation, as in painting, sculpture, and poetry, and everything which is a good imitation, even if the object imitated be not pleasant: for the pleasure does not arise on this account, but there is a process of reasoning, 'this represents that', so that some knowledge is acquired.

The inference from all these passages taken together is not so hostile to Lessing's position as at first sight might appear. R. P.

## CHAPTER XXV

<sup>1</sup> A strong confirmation of the doctrine, that all pleasure is a reflex of activity, and that the free energy of every power is pleasurable, is derived from the phenomena presented by those affections which we emphatically denominate the painful. . . . Take, for example, in the first place, the affection of grief—the sorrow we feel in the loss of a beloved object. Is the affection unaccompanied with pleasure? So far is this from being the case, that the pleasure so greatly predominates over the pain as to produce a mixed emotion, which is far more pleasurable than any other of which the wounded heart is susceptible. It is expressly stated by the younger Pliny, in a passage which commences with these words: 'Est quaedam etiam dolendi voluptas', etc. 'This has also been frequently signalled by the poets',—of whom the author cites several: SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON's *Lectures on Metaphysics*, vol. II. pp. 481, 482. R. P.

Dante expresses an exactly opposite opinion

Nessun maggior dolore  
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice  
Nella miseria. *Inf.* v. 121-3.

Petrarch has the same thought

Con dolor rimembrando il tempo lieto.  
*Sonetti*, etc. In *Morte di Laura Sestina*. Cant. 46.

The converse may also be true

Forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit. R. P.

<sup>2</sup> Νεφέλαι, 169-173

M. But lately of a thought magnificent

A Lizard robbed him. St. How? I pray thee, tell me.

M. As he was contemplating with open mouth

The ways and changes of the varying moon,

A Lizard from the roof dropped filth upon him.

St. Oh clever Lizard that could foul the mouth

Of Socrates.

The classical reader will remember the misfortune which befell Gorgias, and his remarkable expostulation with the swallow or nightingale which caused it, in the third book of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, c. 4, § 3. R. P.

<sup>3</sup> *The Connoisseur*, vol. i. No. 21. The whole passage is copied from the English into the notes by the author; but as, in my opinion, the disgusting entirely absorbs the ridiculous, I will not inflict a repetition and expansion of the description in the text upon my readers. *The Connoisseur* 'by Mr. Town', consisting of 140 numbers, was written almost entirely by Colman and Thornton—four volumes, published in 1761. I do not believe Lord Chesterfield wrote in it; he died A.D. 1773. R.P.

<sup>4</sup> Scut. Hercul. 266. Achlys, Ἀχλὺς, Caligo, is the name in Hesiod of the personification of wretchedness, as represented on the shield of Hercules. Hesiod, one of the earliest Greek poets, is supposed to have lived at least one hundred years later than Homer, about B.C. 850. His greatest work was Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι. The Ἄσπις Ἡρακλέους, scutum Herculis, referred to in the text, is thought to have been part of a larger work. There is a translation of *The Remains of Hesiod* into English verse, by C. A. Elton, 1812. R. P.

<sup>5</sup> Περὶ Ὑψους, τμήμα 4, p. 15, ed. T. Fabri.—Longinus, Dionysius Cassius, a Greek philosopher of great reputation, who flourished in the third century of the Christian Era; born about A.D. 213, died A.D. 273. He spent a considerable part of his life at Athens, where his lectures were celebrated, and his best works written. His thorough knowledge of Palmyra and his ardent admiration for Plato led him, when he went to the East and became the trusted adviser of Queen Zenobia of Palmyra, to exhort her to

shake off the Roman yoke, which she vainly tried to do. Aurelian destroyed Palmyra, and put to death Longinus. Longinus is (Homerically speaking) a head and shoulders higher than the philosophers of his time. His work on the sublime, *Περὶ Ὕψους*, referred to in the text, is extremely eloquent and beautiful. R. P.

- <sup>6</sup> Shakspeare gives them to his monster Caliban.

And I with my long nails will dig thee pig nuts.

*Tempest*, act ii, sc. 2. R. P.

- <sup>7</sup> *Philoct.* 31-39 :

*NE.* I see no trace of human creature here.

*OD.* Nor food, nor household implements to cook it.

*NE.* A mass of leaves heaped up to form a couch.

*OD.* All bare besides. Naught else beneath the roof.

*NE.* A bowl made all of wood, the workmanship  
Of some rude hand ; see too some firewood.

*OD.* And this is all the treasure that he hath.

*NE.* Alas ! alas ! these reeking rags behold,

The solace of his wounds, laid here to dry. R. P.

- <sup>8</sup> *Acneid*, ii, 277.

- <sup>9</sup> *Metamorph.* vi, 387

The skin was rent from off the shrieking wretch,

And he was all one wound.\* The blood

Flowed all around, while the discovered nerves

Lay open and the palpitating veins

Quivered without their covering, you might see

Bowels protruding from their place,—the fibres

Transparent in his breast you might have counted. R. P.

- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* viii. 810

To her far off,

To her the goddess's commands he bears ;

A while delaying, and while distant still,

But now arrived, she seemed at once to feel

The pangs of hunger. R. P.

- <sup>11</sup> *Hym. in Cererem.* 111-116.

<sup>12</sup> *Argonaut.* ii. 228-33. Apollonius Rhodius, born about B.C. 235, flourished under Ptolemy Philopetor (B.C. 224-221), and Ptolemy Epiphanes (B.C. 204-181). He lived at first in Alexandria, which he deserted for Rhodes ; but he afterwards returned to Alexandria, where he died

\* But Shakspeare excites no disgust when he says of Coriolanus  
from face to foot,  
He was a thing of blood. Act ii, sc. 2. R. P.



chief librarian of the Museum. His *Argonautica*, 'The Expedition of the Argonauts', consists of four books. Valerius Flaccus was his Roman imitator.

Even from the trifling food that they may leave  
Rises a foul intolerable smell,  
Such as no mortal could endure to face.  
Not had he heart of beaten adamant,  
But bitter need of food compelleth me  
To stay, and staying fill my wretched maw. R. P.

18 Tu dei saper ch' io fui 'l conte Ugolino,  
E questi l' arcivescovo Ruggieri.  
Or ti dirò perch' i son tal vicino.  
Che per l' effetto de' suoi ma' pensieri,  
Fidandomi di lui, io fossi preso  
E poscia morto, dir non è mestieri.  
Però quel che non puoi avere inteso,  
Ch'è come la morte mia fu cruda,  
Udirai; e saprai se m' ha offeso.  
Breve pertugio dentro dalla muda,  
La qual per me ha 'l titol della fame;  
E 'n che conviene ancor ch' altri si chiuda,  
M' avea mostrato per lo suo forame  
Più lune già; quand' io feci 'l mal sonno,  
Che del futuro mi squarciò 'l velame.  
Questi pareva a me maestro e donno,  
Cacciando 'l lupo e i lupicini al monte,  
Per che i Pisan veder Lucca non ponno.  
Con cagne magre, studiose e conte,  
Gualandi con Sismondi e con Lanfranchi  
S' avea messi dinanzi dalla fronte.  
In picciol corso mi pareano stanchi  
Lo padre e i figli; e con l' agute sane  
Mi pareva lor veder fender li fianchi.  
Quando fui desto innanzi la dimane,  
Planger senti' fra 'l sonno i miei figliuoli,  
Ch' eran meco, e dimandar del pane.  
Ben sei crudel, se tu già non ti duoli,  
Pensando ciò che 'l mio cor s' annunziava;  
E se non piangi, di che planger suoli?  
Già eran desti; e l' ora s' appressava  
Che 'l cibo ne solea essere addotto,  
E per suo sogno ciascun dubitava;  
Ed io senti' ch'iovar l' uscio di sotto  
All' orribile torre; ond' io guardai  
Nel viso a' miei figliuoli senza far motto.  
Io non piangeva; sì dentro impletrai.  
Piangevan eili; e l' Anselmuccio mio  
Disse: Tu guardi al padre: che hai?  
Perciò non lacrimai; nè rispos' io  
Tutto quel giorno, nè la notte appresso,  
Infìn che l' altro sol nel mondo uscìo.  
Com' un poco di raggio si fu messo  
Nel doloroso carcere, ed io scorsi

Per quattro visi lo mió aspetto stesso ;  
 Ambo le mani per dolor mi morsi.  
 E quel, pensando ch' io 'l fessi per voglia  
 Di manicar, di subito levòrsi,  
 E disser : Padre, assai ci fia men doglia,  
 Se tu mangi di noi : tu ne vestisti  
 Queste misere carni, e tu ne spoglia.  
 Quetaimi allor, per non fargli più tristi :  
 Quel di e l' altro stemmo tutti muti.  
 Ahi dura terra, perchè non t' apristi ?  
 Posciachè fummo al quarto di venuti,  
 Gaddo mi si gettò disteso a' piedi,  
 Dicendo : Padre mio, che non m' aiuti ?  
 Qui vi morì. E come tu me vedi  
 Vid' io li tre cascar ad uno ad uno  
 Tra 'l quinto di e 'l sesto : ond' io mi diedi.  
 Già ciero a brancolar sopra ciascuno,  
 E tre di gli chiamai, poichè e' fur morti ;  
 Poscia, più che il dolor, potè il digiuno.  
 Quand' ebbè detto ciò, con gli occhi torti  
 Riprese 'l teschio misero co' denti,  
 Che furo all' osso, come d' un can, forti.

DANTE, *La Divina Commedia*, *Inf.* xxxiii. 13-78.

' Know-I was on earth  
 Count Ugolino, and the Archbishop he  
 Ruggieri. Why I neighbour him so close,  
 Now list. That through effect of his ill thoughts  
 In him my trust reposing, I was ta'en  
 And after murder'd, need is not I tell.  
 What therefore thou canst not have heard, that is,  
 How cruel was the murder, shalt thou hear,  
 And know if he have wrong'd me. A small grate  
 Within that mew, which for my sake the name  
 Of famine bears, where others yet must pine,  
 Already through its opening several moons  
 Had shown me, when I slept the evil sleep  
 That from the future tore the curtain off.  
 This one methought, as master of the sport,  
 Rode forth to chase the gaunt wolf and his whelps  
 Unto the mountain which forbids the sight  
 Of Lucca to the Pisan. With lean brachs  
 Inquisitive and keen, before him ranged  
 Lanfranchi with Sismondi and Guslandi.  
 After short course the father and the sons  
 Seem'd tired and lagging, and methought I saw  
 The sharp tusks gore their sides. When I awoke  
 Before the dawn, amid their sleep I heard  
 My sons (for they were with me) weep and ask  
 For bread. Right cruel art thou, if no pang  
 Thou feel at thinking what my heart foretold ;  
 And if not now, why use thy tears to flow ?  
 Now had they waken'd ; and the hour drew near  
 When they were wont to bring us food ; the mind  
 Of each misgave him through his dream, and I

Heard at its outlet underneath lock'd up  
 The horrible tower : whence, uttering not a word,  
 I look'd upon the visage of my sons.  
 I wept not : so all stone I felt within.  
 They wept : and one, my little Anselm, cried,  
 "Thou lookest so ! Father, what ails thee ?" Yet  
 I shed no tear nor answer'd all that day  
 Nor the next night, until another sun  
 Came out upon the world. When a faint beam  
 Had to our doleful prison made its way,  
 And in four countenances I descried  
 The image of my own, on either hand  
 Through agony I bit ; and they, who thought  
 I did it through desire of feeding, rose  
 O' the sudden, and cried, "Father, we should grieve  
 Far less, if thou wouldst eat of us : thou gav'st  
 These weeds of miserable flesh we wear ;  
 And do thou strip them off from us again".  
 Then, not to make them sadder I kept down  
 My spirit in stillness. That day and the next  
 We all were silent. Ah, obdurate earth !  
 Why open'dst not upon us ? When we came  
 To the fourth day, then Gaddo at my feet  
 Outstretch'd did fling him, crying, "Hast no help  
 For me, my father ?" There he died ; and e'en  
 Plainly as thou seest me, saw I the three  
 Fall one by one 'twixt the fifth day and sixth :  
 Whence I betook me now grown blind, to grope  
 Over them all, and for three days aloud  
 Call'd on them who were dead. Then, fasting got  
 The mastery of grief ! Thus having spoke,  
 Once more upon the wretched skull his teeth  
 He fastened like a mastiff's 'gainst the bone,  
 Firm and unyielding. *Inf.* xxxiii, Cary's Translation.

<sup>14</sup> *The Sea Voyage*, act iii, sc. 1. A French pirate is wrecked with his ship upon a desert island. Avarice and envy separate his crew, and give an opportunity to a miserable couple, who for a long time in this island had been exposed to the extremities of famine, to run off with the ship. The wrecked men, without any means of sustaining life, see the most miserable of deaths before their eyes, and they express, one to the other, their hunger and despair as follows. [Here Lessing cites a long passage from the play, beginning—

LAMURE. Oh what a tempest have I in my stomach !  
 and ending—

LAMURE. A most unprovident villain.

The details are very disgusting ; I abstain from stating them. R. P.]

<sup>15</sup> Richardson, *Essay on the Theory of Painting*, ed. 1773, p. 51. [The passage is

Every figure and animal must be affected in the picture as one should suppose they would, or ought to be. And all the expressions of the several passions and sentiments must be made with regard to the characters of the persons moved by them. At the raising of Lazarus, some may be allowed to be made to hold something before their noses, and this would be very just, to denote that circumstance in the story, the time he had been dead; but this is exceedingly improper in the laying our Lord in the sepulchre, although he had been dead much longer than he was; however, Pordenone has done it. R. P.]

## CHAPTER XXVI

<sup>1</sup> If Lessing had ever accomplished the full design of his work, and had finished the other parts of it of which we have but fragments, he would doubtless have included music in its modern sense in this bond: 'etenim omnes artes, quae ad humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune vinculum et quasi cognatione quâdam inter se continentur'. Lessing knew well the speaker and the sentiment. R. P.

<sup>2</sup> Gurauer remarks that this passage, which for ever united the kindred geniuses of Lessing and Winkelmann, was expected by Herder and others to be followed immediately by a searching and thorough examination of Winkelmann's work. 'This expectation was however not then, nor ever afterwards fulfilled'. Nicolai and other friends of Lessing also expected a quarrel between Winkelmann and Lessing; the latter being reported to have said that the antiquarian part of the *Geschichte der Kunst* rested on a rotten foundation. That no quarrel took place was mainly due to Lessing's forbearance, though partly to a somewhat reluctant perception by Winkelmann of Lessing's merit. *Leben und Werke von Lessing*, pp. 11, 88-9. R. P.

<sup>3</sup> *Geschichte der Kunst*, 347.

<sup>4</sup> Not Apollodorus, but Polydorus. Pliny alone mentions these artists, and I am not aware that the manuscripts differ from one another as to this name. Hardouin would certainly have remarked it. All the ancient editions

read Polydorus. Herr Winkelmann must in this little matter have made a slip in writing.

<sup>5</sup> Ἀθηνόδορος δὲ καὶ Δαμίας. Οὗτοι δὲ Ἀρκαδῆς εἰσιν ἐκ Κλειτόρος. Phoc., cap. 9, 819, edit. Kuh.

<sup>6</sup> Plinius, lib. xxxiv, cap. 8: 'Propriae hujus (i. e. Lysippi) videntur esse argutiae operum, custoditae in minimis quoque rebus'. But see lib. xxxv, cap. 10, where Pliny says, 'Parasius Ephesi natus et ipse multa constituit. Primus symmetriam picturae dedit, primus argutias vultus elegantiam capilli', etc. The reference of Lessing to Pliny is here, as elsewhere, incorrect. R. P.

<sup>7</sup> Lib. xxxvi, cap. 5.

Beyond these, there are not many sculptors of high repute, for in the case of several works of very great excellence, the number of artists that have been engaged upon them has proved a considerable obstacle to the fame of each, no individual being able to engross the whole of the credit, and it being impossible to award it in due proportion to the names of the several artists combined. Such is the case of the Laocoon, for example, in the palace of the Emperor Titus, a work that may be looked upon as preferable to any other production of the art of painting or of statuary. It is sculptured from a single block, both the main figure as well as the children, and the serpents with their marvellous folds. This group was made in concert by three most eminent artists, Agesander, Polydorus, and Athenodorus, natives of Rhodes. In similar manner also the palaces of the Caesars, in the Palatium have been filled with most splendid statuary, the work of Craterus, in conjunction with Pythodorus, of Polydeuces and Hermolaus, and of another Pythodorus with Artemon; some of the statues, also, are by Aphrodisius of Tralles, who worked alone. The Pantheon of Agrippa has been decorated by Diogenes of Athens, and the Caryatides, by him, which form the columns of that temple, are looked upon as masterpieces of excellence: the same, too, with the statues that are placed upon the roof, though, in consequence of the height, they have not had an opportunity of being so well appreciated. R. P.

<sup>8</sup> Boeotie, cap. xxxiv, p. 778, edit. Kuhn.

<sup>9</sup> Plinius, lib. xxxvi, cap. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Geschichte der Kunst, t. 11, s. 331.

<sup>11</sup> Plinius, lib. xxxvi, cap. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Ad ver. 7, lib. 11, *Aeneid*, and especially at verse 183, lib. xi. It would be right to add such a work as this to the catalogue of the lost writings of this man.

<sup>13</sup> Plinius, lib. xxxvi, cap. 5.

## CHAPTER XXVII

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte der Kunst*, t. 11, s. 347.

<sup>2</sup> *Lib.* xxxvi, cap. v.

<sup>3</sup> Consult the catalogue of superscriptions upon ancient works of art (*Ad Phaedri, fab. 5, lib. 1*), and take at the same time into council the corrections of them from Gronovius, *Praef. ad tom. ix. Thesauri Antiqu. Graec.*

<sup>4</sup> *Praefatio.*

Yet lest I should seem to be altogether attacking the Greeks, I would choose that I should be understood as being of the class of those first masters of painting and modelling, whom you will find in these books writing on their completed works (works which we are never tired of admiring), an inscription denoting incompleteness, as 'Apelles was making' or 'Polyclerus', as if the work was ever inchoate and imperfect; so that from the varieties of criticism the artist might have a way of escape towards pardon, as being ready to correct whatever was desired, if he had not been cut off. How modest it was in them to inscribe all their works as if they were their last, and as if in each case they had been during them cut off by fate. Three works and no more, I believe, which I shall describe in their turn, are said to have been inscribed, as if finished, 'He made', by which it appeared that the artist had the greatest confidence in his work, and for this reason all these were the subjects of great jealousy. R. P.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

<sup>1</sup> *Gesch. der Kunst*, t. 11, s. 394.

<sup>2</sup> *Cap. xii.*

<sup>3</sup> On this passage (Fusell remarks) simple and unperplexed, if we except the words 'Casterique artifices', where something is evidently dropped or changed, there can I trust be but one opinion—that the manœuvre of Chabrias was defensive, and consisted in giving the phalanx a stationary, and at the same time impenetrable posture, to check the progress of the enemy; a repulse, not a victory was obtained; the Thebans were content to maintain their ground, and not a word is said by the historian of a pursuit, when Agesilaus, startled at the contrivance, called off his troops: but the warrior of Agasias rushes forward in an assailing attitude, whilst with his head and shield turned upwards he seems to guard himself from some attack above him. Lessing, aware of this, to make the passage square with his conjecture, is reduced to a change of punctuation, and accordingly transposes the decisive comma after 'scuto', to 'genu', and reads 'obnixogenu, scuto projectaque hasta—docuit'. This alone might warrant us to dismiss

his conjectures as less solid than daring and acute. FUSELI, *Life and Writings*, vol. ii. p. 148, note, lecture 111.

Lessing became aware of his mistake, and retracted it in his *Antiquarische Briefe*. O. Müller (*Handbuch*, 163) observes that it is probably a foot-soldier defending himself with shield and lance against a soldier on horseback—the figure being taken by Agasias from a larger group. Gurauer (2), 89–90, note. R. P.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### <sup>1</sup> Περὶ Τῦφους, τμῆμα ιδ', edit. F. Fabri, p. 36–39.

[And how the rhetorical imagination requires one thing and that of poets another, you will not fail to perceive, nor that the end of that in poetry is to astonish, and of that in oratory to make clear. Assuredly the language used by the poets has an extravagance more fabulous, and every way transcending what is credible; but the best part of the rhetorical imagination is ever that which is practicable and true. R. P.]

### <sup>2</sup> *De Pictura Vet.* lib. i. cap. 4, p. 33.

[Especially when the end of the poetical imagination is to astonish, but of that of painting to make clear. And among the poets, as the same Longinus says. R. P.]

### <sup>3</sup> *Von der Nachahmung der Griech. Verse*, s. 23.

### <sup>4</sup> Τμῆμα β'.

[Next to this is a third sort of deformity in pathetic writing, which Theodorus calls Parenthyrsus. It is an unseasonable and empty grief where none is needed, or an uncontrolled one where one under control is required. R. P.]

### <sup>5</sup> *Geschichte der Kunst*, t. i. s. 23.

### <sup>6</sup> Sat. xii. 43, etc.

'Away with all that's mine', he cries, 'away!'  
And plunges in the deep, without delay,  
Purple, etc.  
With these, neat baskets from the Britons bought,  
Rich silver chargers by Parthenius wrought,  
A huge two-handed goblet, which might strain  
A Pholus, or a Fuscus' wife, to drain;  
Follow'd by numerous dishes, heaps of plate  
Plain and enchased, which served, of ancient date,  
The wily chapman of the Olynthian State.

GIFFORD. R. P.

<sup>7</sup> Herodotus de Vita Homeri, p. 756, edit. Wessel.

It should be observed that in MSS. and early editions the name of Herodotus is frequently confounded with Herodorus and Heliodorus. Whether the work *Περὶ τῆς Ὀμήρου βιοῆς*, is the production of a grammarian of the name of Herodotus, or whether the author's name is a mere invention, it is impossible to say; thus much only we know, that some of the ancients themselves attributed it to Herodotus the historian. Steph. Byz. s. v. *Νέον τεῖχος*; Suid. s. v. *Ὀμηρος*; Eustath. ad Hom. *Il.* p. 876. SMITH'S *Dict.* v. 2, p. 436. R. P.]

<sup>8</sup> *Iliad*, H 219:—

Ajax came near : and like a tow'r his shield his bosom barr'd ;  
The right side brass, and seven ox-hides within it quilted hard :  
Old Tychius, the best currier that did in Hyla dwell,  
Did frame it for exceeding proof, and wrought it wondrous well.

CHAPMAN. R. P.

<sup>9</sup> *Gesch. der Kunst*, t. 1, s. 176 ; Plinius, lib. xxxv. sect. 36 ; Athenaeus, lib. xii. p. 543.

Athenaeus, born in Egypt ; a man of letters, a *γραμματικός*. His date is uncertain, probably between A.D. 200 and 300. His surviving work is *Δειπνοσοφίσται*, usually rendered a *banquet of the learned* ; in it he gives extracts from authors whose works are lost. R. P.

<sup>10</sup> *Gesch. der Kunst*, t. 11, s. 353 ; Plinius, lib. xxxvi. sect. 4, p. 739, 1-17.

<sup>11</sup> *Gesch. der Kunst*, t. 11, s. 328.

<sup>12</sup> *Κροκυλεγμός* is 'a picking off, twitching at the flocks of wool', applied to delirious people in medicine ; hence metaphorically it means 'a dealing in trifles, a trifling', from *κροκός* or *κροκή*, the flock or nap of wool. Kleinigkeitskräherei Gurauer paraphrases it, i.e. giving one's mind to trifles. *Lessing's Leben und Werke*, ii. 89. R. P.



## APPENDIX

*Certain Notes prepared by Lessing for a Second and Third Part of the 'Laocoon,' and perhaps for a new edition of the First Part.*

### § 1

I. LAOCOON: Repetition of Winkelmann's observation—True cause from the law of Beauty—Proof that Beauty was the highest law of ancient Art.

II. Second cause: From the change of the Transitory into the Stationary—The extremest moment is the least fruitful.

III. Nature to be further compared with the picture of the Poet—Wherein and wherefore both stood apart from each other.

IV. Agreement of both: Probable presumption arising out of this agreement that one had the other before his eyes. The Greeks tell the story very differently; hence the probability that the artists imitated Virgil.

V. A Spence can scarcely be of my opinion—His strange system according to which all merit of the Poet is lost—Proof how little he understood the distinct domains of Painting and Poetry, (1) The infuriated Venus, (2) Allegorical beings.

VI. A Caylus has done more justice to the Poets. He acknowledges that the artists are much indebted to the Poets and might be still more indebted. His pictures from Homer—Objection to the combined results of them, from the invisible scenes of the Poet.

VII. False explanation, affecting the order of rank which Caylus assigns to Poets according to the number of their pictures. He has not discriminated between the picture of which the Poet, and the picture of which the Painter may avail himself. He always takes the latter: and the other is left out, wherefore the order of rank can only be one-sided—Proofs from the fourth book of the *Iliad*.

VIII. Reasons why the picture of the Poet can seldom be the picture of the Painter. The former paints progressive action, and the latter beings subsisting by themselves on their own account. Examples how Homer knows how to change these beings into actions.

IX. Answer to the objection to the Homeric shield, from this point of view—The Poet paints expressly that which the artist had intended, and will not allow himself to be confined within the limits of material art.

## § 2

I. WINKELMANN'S history of Art has in the meantime appeared—Praise of it. How he deals with the epoch of Laocoon. He has not the slightest historical grounds in his favour: his judgment is entirely founded on the Art—Pliny appears, when he mentions Laocoon, to be speaking only of modern artists. Refutation of Maffei's opinion which Winkelmann did not choose entirely to expose: and why.

II. Proof from the *εἰσολαί* and *εἰσολήσας* that Laocoon is not so old a work—Detailed explanation of certain passages in Pliny.

III. But if he does not belong to the epoch which Winkelmann assigns to him: at least he deserves to belong to it, and that suffices for a history of the Art which is to form our taste—Moreover, Winkelmann has spoken with greater precision as to the repose of the Laocoon, and he is of my opinion that beauty is the cause of this repose.

IV. His declaration that the modern poets have more pictures than the ancient, and furnish fewer—a commentary on these words to be desired—Whence the difference between poetical and material pictures springs—On the difference of the signs which Poetry and Painting make use of.

V. In Space and in Time—consequences—to the former bodies, to the latter motion—this motion made significant through the *media* of bodies. These bodies made significant through the *media* of motion—Express Painting of bodies therefore forbidden to Poetry—And when it does paint such, it does it not as an imitative Art, but as a

medium of illustration—So Painting is not an imitative Art, but a mere medium of illustration when it represents different epochs in one space.

vi. Beauty in particular is not the subject of Poetry, but of all creative Arts. Homer has not painted Helen—But the old painters have made use of all his indications of her beauty. The Helen of Zeuxis.

vii. Of Ugliness—defence of Thersites : in a poem—Rejection of him in a picture. Caylus was right in leaving him out. La Motte not. Introduction of Thersites into the Epigoniad. Nireus was not the most beautiful of the Greeks—therefore Clarke's remark is false in his letters on Literature, vii, p. 1251. N.B. of Disgust—The Discordia in Petronius.

viii. Beauty—pictorial value of Bodies—This of itself leads us to the rule of the ancients : that expression must be subordinated to Beauty—The Ideal of Beauty in Painting has perhaps caused the Ideal of moral perfection in Poetry—From it also the Ideal in actions has been imagined. The Ideal of actions consists (1) in the abridgment of Time, (2) in the elevation of motives and the exclusion of accident, (3) in the excitement of the passions.

ix. Still more are inanimate beauties forbidden to the Poet. Condemnation of Thomson's pictures—of Landscape painting, whether there is an ideal of beauty in Landscapes. It is denied—Hence the inferior work of Landscapes—The Greeks and Italians had none. Proof from the reversed horses of Pausanias that they never painted subordinate landscapes—Presumption that all perspective painting arose out of scene painting.

x. Poetry paints bodies only by the significance of motion. Artifice of the Poets to reveal visible qualities by means of motion—Examples—Height of a tree—Size of a serpent—Of motion in Painting—Why men only and not wild beasts are there—Of Speed.

xi. Therefore Poetry paints bodies with only one or two traits—Difficulty in which Painting is often placed in painting these traits—Distinction—Poetical pictures in which these traits can be easily and well painted, and in which they cannot. The former are Homeric, the latter Miltonic and Klopstockian.

xii. Presumption—that the blindness of Milton in

financed his style of painting—Proof, e. g. from darkness visible.

XIII. The first cause was the Oriental style. Moses. Conjecture: from the lack of painting. That what is Biblical is not necessarily beautiful—Grammarians find faults of language in the Bible: artists may find faults in the pictures it gives. The Holy Ghost has in both instances operated *Secundum subjectam materiam*—and if the Revelation had happened in a Northern Country there might have been a totally different style and different pictures.

XIV. Homer has very few Miltonic pictures—They are striking—but do not abstract you, and for this reason Homer was the greater painter. He has put his whole picture clear and clean—and has shown a painter's eye—Remark on the groups—never more than three persons.

XV. Of collective actions, such as are common to Poetry and Painting.

I. ON the distinction between natural and arbitrary signs. The signs of Painting are not all natural, and the natural characteristics of arbitrary signs cannot be so natural as the natural characteristics of natural things. There is much that is conventional on the subject—Example of the clouds.

II. They also cease to be natural by change of dimensions. Necessity of the Painter to make use of those as large as life—Failure of the Art in mountainous scenery. Poetry can produce vertigo but not Painting.

III. The signs of Poetry are not purely arbitrary. Its words considered as tones can naturally imitate no objects. This admitted. But its words are susceptible of being differently placed with relation to each other: can therefore paint different series of things, both following on and by the side of each other—Example of this. So the motion of organs can express the motion of things—Example of this.

IV. Introduction of divers arbitrary signs through allegory. Good use of allegory in so far as Art by it is brought back to the perception of Beauty and is kept aloof from wild expression.

v. Ill use of widely discursive allegories, which are always dark. Illustration from Raffaello's school of Athens; and especially from the deification by Homer.

vi. Use of arbitrary signs in the art of dancing.—That on this very account the art of dancing of the ancients so far surpassed that of the moderns.

vii. The use of arbitrary signs in Music—Attempt to explain thereby the marvel and the value of ancient music—Of the influence which the legislator derived from it.

viii. Necessity of observing limits in all the fine arts, and not indulging in all possible extensions and supposed improvements. Because through these extensions they are led astray from their true end and lose their impression. Euler's discoveries in Music.

ix. On this extension of modern times in painting—Whereby the Art has become infinitely difficult: and it is very probable that all our artists will remain in mediocrity. Influence which faults in the adjoining parts of a subject, e.g. in light and shadow and perspective, have on the whole, whereas on the other head the entire abstinence from all these parts would not be repulsive to us.

x. Encouragement to call back educated artists from the old times, and to occupy themselves with the events of our own time. Aristotle's advice to paint the exploits of Alexander.

### *Additional Notes to § 3*

A. i. Scattered remarks on certain passages of Winkelmann's history: where he has not been sufficiently accurate. The Antigone of Sophocles. The chalices of Parthenius. The artist of the shield of Ajax.

ii. Of the Borghese gladiators.

iii. Of the Cupido of Praxiteles.

iv. Of the art of casting in bronze: that it was not lost in the time of Nero.

v. Conjecture as to the Net, p. 203 [Winkelmann].

vi. Of the schools of the old painting, and of the Asiatic artists.

B. Gerard believes, contrary to my opinion, that Painting is able to express that kind of the sublime which is connected with magnitude of dimensions, for, says he, if it cannot preserve these very dimensions, at least it can

leave to them their comparative greatness, and this is sufficient to produce the sublime. He is mistaken. It is sufficient to show me that these comparatively great objects must be sublime in nature, but not sufficient to produce the feelings which they awaken in nature. A great majestic temple which I can scarcely take in at a single glance is on this very account sublime, because I can let my eye wander round it, and wherever it rests I observe the harmonious proportions of its grandeur, solidity, and simplicity. But this very temple transferred to the narrow space of a copper-plate ceases to be sublime, that is, to excite my astonishment, for the very reason that I can at once cast my eye over it all. If I think of it as executed in all its proper dimensions, I only feel that I should be astonished to see it so executed; but at present I do not wonder at it. It is true that I can wonder at its design, at its noble simplicity; but this is a wonder which arises from the sight of the skill of the artist not from the sight of the dimensions. Cibber's criticism on a passage of Nat. Lee, which he declares to be nonsense, because no picture could be made from it. And what Warburton on the contrary remarks (on Pope's *Prologue to the Satires*, v. 121). I hold with Warburton that the passage has beauty. But Cibber is also right that it would not bear being painted. What is the inference? that the criterion is false, and that certainly there are poetical pictures which cannot be painted.

The artist must keep before his eyes not only the power but especially the end of art. He must not do all that Art can do. It is only because we forget this principle that our arts are more discursive and more difficult, and for this reason less effective.

*Observations sur l'Italie*, tom. ii, p. 30. In the days of Saint Rochus, the Venetian Painters had a public exhibition of their works in *la scuola di S. Rocco*.

Cette Scuola, l'une des premières de Venise, est remplie de sujets du N. T. de la main de Tintoret de la plus grande force de ce Maître. Je fus singulièrement frappé de celui qui représente l'Annonciation. Le mur qui ferme la chambre de la Vierge du côté de la campagne, s'écroule, et l'ange entre de plein vol par la brèche

This observation is excellent. As the Painter cannot

express the spiritual essence of the Angel, which can penetrate all bodies without destroying them, he expresses his power. In the end he excites the same idea, namely, that such a being cannot be excluded by anything, or restrained by anything; it may be on account of his spirituality or of his power.

Plinius, lib. 35, cap 10 of Arellius : *Flagitio insigni corrupisset artem, . . . Deas pingens, sed Dilectarum imagine.* He made portraits of these instead of painting them according to an Ideal. Several modern painters have done the same thing with respect to the Blessed Virgin, e. g. Carlo Maratti, who took the portrait of her from his own wife.

In the *Anthology* of the younger Burmann (p. 20) there is an Epigram on Laocoon in which the line

Hinc tolerasse ferunt saeva venena virum

is suspicious on account of the *tolerasse*. If this Epigram is, as appears, made on the statue, it would be necessary to change the *tolerasse*; but the Poet may here also and at the same time intended to have regard to the patience with which Laocoon endured his own grief.

Richardson \* (*Theory of Painting*), p. 6: 'After having read Milton one sees Nature with better eyes than before, beauties appear which else had been unregarded'.

And this, moreover, is the only real use which the artist can extract from the Poet. Poems ought to be like perpetual eyes to them and a sort of magnifying glasses through which they can observe things which they could not discriminate with their naked eyes.

Page 8. Richardson considers the imitative Arts from a politico-economical point of view, in so far as they increase the wealth of a state. It is true that the artist

\* Lessing cites Richardson, *Traité de la Peinture*, t. 1, p. 9, and the whole passage in French. Probably he was only acquainted with a French translation bearing this title. But Richardson wrote—

1. The Theory of Painting.

2. Essay on the Art of Criticism so far as it relates to Painting.

4. The Science of a Connoisseur.

These are all to be found in one volume (1773), and Lessing seems to have confounded them together, or probably the French translation did so, and the reference to the pages is generally wrong. R. P.

employs few and not very costly materials and out of them creates something which is infinitely more valuable.

But if the Administrative Government were to undertake the supervision and protection of Painting, as if it were a public manufactory ; the destruction of Art and the corruption of Taste would not only be inevitable but at last the labour expended would not be worth as much as the materials worked up in it.

Page 27 (*Theory of P. of Invention*) Example—Instance in which Raffaello has departed as much from natural as from historical truth. From the former in his cartoons at Hampton Court, where he represents the miraculous draught of fishes : and makes the boat much too small for the persons in it. From the latter, in the cartoon of the healing by Peter and John of the cripple at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, where he has introduced columns inlaid with figures.

But there is a great difference between these two departures, the latter increases the good effect, the former diminishes it. To the natural eye I mean. The former is repellent to all men, the latter only to the learned

Page 31. There have been great painters who have endeavoured to bring into one picture the consecutive events of a history, e. g. Titian himself ; the whole history of the Prodigal Son, from the time of his quitting his father's house to the time of his great misery. Richardson says this incongruity is like the faults which bad dramatists commit when they overstep the unity of time, and make a single piece last a whole year. But the fault of the painter is infinitely more incongruous. For,

(1.) The painter had not the means which the poet had to assist our imagination with respect to the violation of the unity of time and place. Perspective is an insufficient means for this end.

(2.) The fault of the poet maintains a certain proportion with truth. When we are in the first act in Rome, and in the second in Egypt, we are nevertheless in both these places by degrees : when the Hero marries in the first act, and in the second has grown up children, there is still an interval between the two ; whereas with the painter all the different places are necessarily in one place, all the different periods of time flow together into one point of



time, because we at once look over everything in the work of the painter.

(3.) The poet keeps in view the principal thing : but in the picture the unity of the Hero is lost. For, as I at once look over everything, I see the Hero at the same time more than once, which produces a most unnatural impression.

Page 26 of *Invention*. Raffaello has made use of a three-fold light in one of his pictures in the Vatican, which represents the miraculous delivery of St. Peter from prison. The first is the emanation of light from the angel, the second is the effect of the torch, and the third is the light of the moon. All these three lights have each their own peculiar light and reflective light, and taken all together produce a wonderful effect.

This beauty is, presumably, one of those upon which Raffaello came by accident. As such it deserves all praise. It was not his principal design : and it is neither the first nor the only beauty in his piece.

Page 34. Annibale Caracci never put more than twelve figures into his pictures.

Rubens in his resurrection of Lazarus at Sans Souci has chosen the moment when Lazarus comes forth already alive from the grave. I believe that this is the proper moment ; it obviates the necessity of holding the nose, for the stench could not have continued with the living Lazarus.

Page 61. Raffaello and Annibale Caracci could not altogether dispense with writing in their pictures. For example—however much Painting must keep clear of all composition which is not intelligible of itself—there is nevertheless a great difference when Raffaello or Caracci write, and when any other painter does so. Without the writing, it is true, the particular history represented by Raffaello would not be intelligible, but his picture, as a picture, would always produce an excellent effect. While most other historical painters have only the merit of having represented history.

Page 63. Michael Angelo took his Charon from a passage in Dante—

Caron, dimonio con occhi di bragia

Batte col remo qualunque s' adagia.

In the engraving of the Last Judgment you only recognise the action expressed in the last verse. Did Angelo also represent the eyes of glowing coal?

Page 64. *Of Composition.* On the effect which a picture shall produce upon the eye at a distance, before the separate objects can be distinguished. This is what Coppel compares with the exordium of a speech.

Page 66. In the *Notte del Corregio* in which all the light is shed abroad from the newborn Saviour. I cannot agree with Richardson that on this account the painter ought to have dispensed with the full moon, inasmuch as it would give no light. This very no-light is here a very frequent thought of the painter, founded upon the notion that the great light must obscure the lesser. This thought is more valuable than the little shock which the eye receives is injurious, which shock makes us more attentive than we should otherwise be to the thing itself.

What Richardson (p. 120, &c., 82, 83, *Design on Drawing*) says of the excellence of drawing is very useful in enabling us to define the merit of colourists. If it is true that the artist, when the difficulties of colouring do not distract him, can advance, with all freedom of thought, straight to his end: if it be true that in the drawings of the best painters we find a spirit, a life, a freedom, a delicacy which we do not find in their paintings: if it be true that the pen and the pencil can make things which the brush cannot make—if it be true that the brush with a single *liquido* in thin liquid can execute things to which, he who has to manage many colours, especially in oil, cannot attain—then I ask, whether the most wonderful colouring can compensate us for all this loss? Indeed I might ask whether it were not to be desired that the art of painting in oil had never been discovered?

Page 212. Is it very probable that the hope which Richardson here expresses can ever be fulfilled? That a painter should arise who would surpass Raffaello, because he would combine the *Contour* of the ancient masters with

best colouring of the modern masters. It is true that I see no impossibility to prevent this combination taking place. It is, however, another question whether the age and industry of any mortal man are sufficient to bring this combination to perfection. The remarks which have been made upon *drawing* appear to answer this question in the negative. But if this were all, each artist, the greater advance he had made in one part, the more he would necessarily lag behind in the other. The question therefore remains in which part we should wish him to excel? On the subject of excellence in *drawing* there is a good passage p. 26, *Sur l'art de critiquer en fait de peinture*.

### C. Allegory

One of the most concise and beautiful of allegorical fictions is to be found in Milton, where Satan deceives Uriel (*Paradise Lost*, bk. iii. 685)

Oft though wisdom wake, suspicion sleeps  
At wisdom's gate, and to simplicity  
Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill  
Where no ill seems.

It is in this way that allegorical fictions please me, but to pursue them discursively, to describe with all the attributes of painting these imaginary beings, and to found upon them a whole series of manifold events, seems to be a childish, gothic, monkish kind of wit. The only way to render a discursive allegorical fiction at all tolerable is that which Cebes has made use of; he does not narrate a mere fiction, but tells us how it would have been treated by a painter.

### The Blindness of Milton

I am of opinion that the blindness of Milton had an influence upon his manner of painting and of describing visible objects.

Besides the example to which I have already adverted, of the flames which radiate darkness from themselves, I find one (*Paradise Lost*, bk. iii. 722) which perhaps may also be adduced in this place—Uriel wishes to show the

earth, the dwelling of man, to Satan, transformed into an angel of light, and says

Look downward on that globe, whose hither side  
With light from hence though but reflected, shines.

You will remark that both of them were looking from the sun, from which they could only see that side of the earth which was turned towards it. But from the words of the poet it would appear as if they could have seen the other hemisphere upon which no light fell, which was impossible. It is true that we can often see both the illumined and the unillumined half of the moon ; but that is because we are situated in a third place, and not on the spot from which the illumination goes forth. But the general effect of his blindness appears in his industrious painting of visible objects. Homer seldom paints them by more than a single epithet because a single quality of visible objects suffices at once to remind us of the others which we every day see combined with it before our eyes. A blind man, on the contrary, upon whom the impression of visible objects becomes from time to time weaker and weaker, with whom one single quality of a thing cannot with so much speed and liveliness present to his mind the images of the rest, because he has lost the opportunity of seeing them so often in union : a blind man must therefore naturally have recourse to the device of heaping up qualities, in order to make, by recalling various characteristics, a more lively impression of the image of the whole. When Moses, for example, represents God as saying, ' Let there be light, and there was light ', Moses expresses himself as one seeing man would to another seeing man. It is the blind man only who would think of describing this light, because the recollection of the impression which the light had made upon him having become very weak, he endeavours to strengthen it by all that he has ever thought or felt with respect to light (*Paradise Lost*, bk. vii. 243)

Let there be light, said God, and forthwith light  
Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,  
Sprung from the deep, and from her native east  
To journey through the airy glooms began.

*Pictures from Milton*

i. Of those progressive pictures, of which Homer gives us such excellent examples, there are some very fine ones to be found in Milton, as

i. Satan lifting himself above the burning pool. *Par. Lost*, bk. i. 221-228.

ii. The first opening of the gates of Hell by sin. Bk. ii. 871-883.

iii. The creation of the world. Bk. iii. 708-718.

iv. The descent of Satan into Paradise. Bk. iii. 561, &c., 740-2.\*

v. The flight of Raphael to the earth. Bk. v. 246-277.

vi. The first march of the heavenly host against. Bk. vi. 56-78.

vii. The approach of the Serpent to Eve. Bk. ix. 509.

viii. The building of the bridge from hell to earth by sin and death. Bk. x. 285.

ix. Satan returns to hell and mounts invisibly his throne.

x. The change of Satan into a serpent. Bk. x. 510.

Milton has painted beauty of form, after the manner of Homer, not so much by its ingredients as by its effects. See the passage which describes the effect which the beauty of Eve produced upon Satan. Bk. ix. 455-466.

ii. Even in those pictures which can be the subject of painting, Milton is far richer than Caylus and Winkelmann suppose; although Richardson, who intended to point them out, has been very often unhappy and unintelligent in his attempt, e. g. :

i. Richardson considers Raphael, with his three pair of wings, to be a beautiful subject for painting; and it is

and without longer pause  
Down right into the world's first region throws  
His flight precipitant (l. 560).  
Throws his steep flight in many an aery wheel,  
Nor stayed till on Niphates' top he lights (l. 740).

The references in the original seem to be wrong. R. P.

manifest that it is on account of these six wings that the painter cannot avail himself of this subject. Although the picture is taken from Isaiah, it is not on this account the less capable of being painted. The form of the Cherubim is just as incapable of being painted. *Par. Lost*, bk. xi. 128.

ii. The same may be predicated of the serpent advancing in a perpendicular line (*Par. Lost*, bk. ix. 496), which in painting would be contrary to all laws of equilibrium, though, as described by the poet, it has a very pleasing effect.

### *Of Necessary Faults*

This chapter in the *Poetics* of Aristotle has been as yet the least commented upon.

I call necessary faults those without which there could be no especial beauties, and which could be got rid of only by the loss of these beauties.

Thus, in Milton, the use of speech in its widest extent, which presumes the possession of knowledge which Adam could not have possessed, is a necessary fault. It is true that Adam could not say this or that, and could not be spoken with in this or that language; but let him speak as he must have spoken, and the grand and admirable picture which the poet presented to his readers is lost. And certainly the poet pursues a higher end in filling the imagination of his reader with grand and beautiful images, than in aiming at a general correctness, e.g., (bk. v. 508), the flags and ensigns of the angels.

The theological faults of Milton are of the like kind; or that fault which appears to be in conflict with the more intimate notions which we entertain of the mysteries of religion, but without which he could not have narrated or rendered present in time to us that which happened before time began, e.g., when he makes the Almighty say to His angel (bk. v. 604)

This day have I begot whom I declare  
My only son, and on this holy hill  
Him have anointed, whom ye now behold  
At my right hand : your head, I him appoint.

'This day' must here mean from all eternity; God has

begotten His Son in all eternity: but this Son was not from all eternity what He was to be, or at least was not recognised as such. There was a time when the angels knew nothing of Him, when they saw Him not at the right hand of His Father, when He had not as yet been declared their Lord; and that, according to our orthodoxy, is false. Will it be said that God had, up to that time, left His angels in ignorance of the mysteries of the Trinity? Numberless absurdities would be the consequence of such a position. The true defence of Milton is this, that he was necessarily obliged to commit these faults, that they were unavoidable the moment he undertook to narrate to us in an intelligible succession of time that which did not happen in any such succession of time. If the envy that the evil angels felt of the higher dignity of the Son was the cause of their fall, then it must be supposed that this envy was as much from all eternity as the birth of the Son, &c. But I think that Milton ought to have imagined a better course than this, which is not founded on Holy Writ, but only on the notions of some fathers of the Church.

## § 4

THE true end of a fine art can only be that which it is capable of arriving at without the help of any other.\*

In Painting this is *corporeal* beauty. In order to be able to bring together corporeal beauties of more than one kind, historical painting was invented.

The expression, the representation of history, was not the ultimate object of the painter. History was only a means of attaining his ultimate object, manifold beauty.

Modern painters undisguisedly make the means their end. They paint history for the sake of painting history, and do not reflect that they thereby make their art merely an assistant of other arts and sciences. Or, at least, they make the assistance of other arts and sciences so indispensable to it that their art thereby loses altogether the value of a primitive art.

The expression of corporeal beauty is the end of painting.

\* Pref. p. 24.

The highest corporeal beauty is its highest end.

The highest corporeal beauty exists only in men, and only in them by reason of an ideal.

This ideal is more rarely found in wild beasts; in vegetable and inanimate nature it has no place at all.

This it is which points out his rank to the painter of flowers and landscapes.

He imitates beauties which are incapable of any ideal; and he labours only with the eye and with the hand; and genius has very little or altogether no part in his work.

Yet I always prefer to the landscape painter that historical painter, who, without making beauty his principal object, paints only groups of persons, in order to show his facility in executing expression *alone*, and not expression which is made subordinate to beauty.

o v

A. THE resemblance and harmony of Poetry and Painting has been often sufficiently mooted and discussed, but not, as it appears to me, with sufficient accuracy to prevent all evil influences of the one upon the other. These evil influences have manifested themselves in Poetry by a mania for descriptive painting, and in Painting by a mania for allegory.\* While we like to speak of the former as of a speaking picture, without really knowing what it can and ought to paint; and of the latter as a mute picture without having considered in what degree it can excite distinct ideas,† without departing from its proper end, and becoming an arbitrary kind of writing.

Apart from these improper influences of poets and artists, feeble parallels of Poetry and Painting have often misled the critic into unfounded judgments, when in the

\* Hear, however, Sir J. Reynolds: 'What has been often said to the disadvantage of allegorical poetry—that it is tedious and uninteresting—cannot with the same propriety be applied to painting, where the interest is of a different kind. If allegorical painting produces a greater variety of ideal beauty, a richer, a more various and delightful composition, and gives to the artist a greater opportunity of exhibiting his skill, all the interest he wishes for is accomplished; such a picture not only attracts, but fixes the attention'. *7th Discourse*, pp. 420-1, Dec. 10, 1776. R. P.

† General; for all ideas of painting are distinct. MOSES MENDELSSOHN. *In the margin of the MS.*



works of poets and painters upon one and the same subject, they choose to consider as false the mutual departures from each other observed therein, for which they blame the one or the other accordingly as they have more taste for Poetry or for Painting.

In order to correct these unfounded prejudices, it is worth while for once to reverse the medal, and to consider the difference which exists between Poetry and Painting, in order to see whether this difference is not the consequence of laws which are peculiar to the one or the other, and which often compel one to tread a different path from that which the sister has trodden, if it really means to maintain the name of sister, and is not to resemble a jealous imitating rival.\*

Whether the virtuoso himself can derive any advantage from these enquiries which only teach him to consider clearly whither his mere feeling, uninformed by practice, would lead him, I will not decide. We are agreed that criticism of itself is a science which subserves all culture, although it be granted that it gives no aid to genius.†

B. Poetry and Painting are both imitating arts; the end of both is to awaken within us the most lively sensible representations of their subjects. They have all

\* Du Fresnoy begins his Poem *De Arte Graphica*, by a partial plagiarism from Horace, *De A. P.* 361<sup>1</sup>

Ut pictura poesis erit: similisque poesi  
Sit pictura: refert pars aemula quaeque sororem  
Alternantque vices et nomina; muta poesis  
Dicitur haec, pictura loquens solet illa vocari.

Dryden translates

True poetry the painter's power displays;  
True painting emulates the poet's lays.  
The rival sisters, fond of equal fame,  
Alternate change their office and their name.  
Bid silent poetry the canvas warm,  
The tuneful page with speaking picture charm. R. P.

† 'The boundaries of arts can, without any detriment to the fire of genius, be separated from a very clear perception of the arts, for they only indicate to the Virtuoso from what he has to abstract. They are only negative rules, which can well be the work of an art'. MENDELSSOHN.

<sup>1</sup> The Horatian lines are

Ut pictura poesis: erit quae si propius stes  
Te capiat magis: et quaedam si longius abstes R.

the following rules in common which flow from the idea of imitation and from this end. But they make use of very different means of imitation; and from this difference of means certain rules for each of them must be deduced.

*Painting* makes use of figures and colours in *space*.

*Poetry* of articulate sounds in *time*.

The signs of the former are natural; those of the latter are arbitrary.\*

C. Imitative co-existent † signs can only express objects which co-exist, or the parts of which co-exist. Such objects are bodies. It follows that bodies, with their visible properties, are the proper objects of Painting.

Initiative successive signs can only express objects which are successive, or the parts of which follow in succession.‡ Such objects are more especially designated actions.§ It follows that actions are the proper objects of Poetry.

Nevertheless, all bodies exist not only in *space*, but also in *time*. They endure, and in each moment of their endurance can take a different appearance and be in a different combination. Each of these momentary appearances and combinations is the result of a foregoing one, and can be the cause of a following one, and so each may be the *centrum* of an action. Consequently, Painting can imitate actions but only suggestively, through the media of *bodies*.

\* 'This opposition is more clearly seen in regard to music and painting. The former makes use equally with the latter of natural signs, but it imitates them only by motion. Poetry has some properties in common with music, and some with painting. Its signs are of arbitrary signification, therefore they sometimes express co-existent things without on that account invading the province of painting'. MENDELSSOHN.

† 'Natural'. MENDELSSOHN.

‡ 'No! they express co-existent things, if this signification be arbitrary'. MENDELSSOHN.

§ 'They are more properly motions, for there are actions which consist of co-existent parts, and these are picturesque. But motion consists only of successive parts. We have motions and actions. Music expresses action through motion, and painting motion through action. The former by means of natural sounds, the latter by means of space. Poetry has motion and action by means of arbitrary signs. But poetry has also immovable actions; these are perfectly picturesque, e. g. the Homeric similitude, when the goat herds stand before the hearth, and brandish burning torches against the savage lions. The dying Adonis, the rape of Europa, are a series of pictures in which stationary and movable pictures are interchanged'. MENDELSSOHN.

On the other hand, actions cannot exist by themselves, but must belong to certain beings. In so far now as these beings are bodies, Poetry also paints bodies, but only suggestively through the media of *actions*.\*

D. Painting in its co-existing compositions can only make use of one moment of action, and must therefore choose the most pregnant one, by which the past and the future may be rendered most intelligible.

Even so Poetry, in its successive imitations, can only make use of a single property of bodies, and must choose that one which awakens the most sensible image of the body relatively to the purpose for which he uses it.†

From hence is derived the rule of unity in the use of pictorial epithets and of severe frugality in the painting of corporeal objects. In this consists the grand manner of Homer: and the opposite fault is the weakness of many moderns, especially of *Thomsonian* poets, who will attempt to rival the painter in a field in which they are certain to be vanquished.

E. Homer has only one trait for one thing. A ship is with him at one time a dark ship, at another a hollow ship, at another a swift ship, at the most a well-rowed dark ship. Further in the painting of a ship he will not go. But of the embarking in, the sailing of, the disembarking from the ship he makes a detailed picture, a picture from which the painter, &c.

F. After considering what we agreed upon in our oral communications, I will improve my division of the objects

\* 'Poetry may very well paint bodies, but it must not overleap the following boundaries. If we desire clearly to represent to ourselves a whole contained in space, then we consider—1. the individual parts; 2. their connection; 3. the whole. Our senses accomplish this with such wonderful speed that we believe we perform all these operations at the same time. If, however, all the separate parts of an object contained in space were indicated to us by arbitrary signs, then the third operation, the putting together all the parts, is a work of great difficulty. We are obliged to strain our powers of imagination if we strive to put together such separated parts into a space-filling whole'. MENDELSSOHN.

† 'The poet seeks to bind together for ever Action and Movement; therefore he seldom tarries long on any moment of time. Inasmuch as a more manifold variety is at his command, he does not willingly confine himself to a less. Therefore he avoids stationary actions wherever he can change them into movable. The following well-chosen examples are perfectly adapted to this theory, but they do not show an entire exclusion of all stationary actions'. MENDELSSOHN.

of poetical painting, and of painting proper, in the following manner:—

Painting paints *bodies*, and suggestively through bodies, movements.

Poetry paints *movements*, and suggestively through movements, bodies.

A series of movements which aim at one end are designated an action.

This series of movements is either in the same bodies or divided into separate bodies. If it is in the same bodies I will call it a *simple action*, and when it is divided into more bodies a *collective action*.

As a series of movements in even the same bodies must be seen by repeated glances in *time*, so it is clear that Painting can make no claim upon simple actions. They belong to Poetry simply and alone.

As, on the other hand, the different bodies into which the series of movements is distributed must co-exist in *space*; but space is the proper domain of Painting, so *collective actions* necessarily belong to the subjects of it.

But must these *collective actions*, because they follow in space, be excluded from the subjects of poetical painting?

No; for although these *collective actions* happen in *space*, yet their effect ensues upon the spectator in *time*. That is, the space which we can overlook at once has its limits; for as amid manifold co-existing parts we can only be vividly conscious of the least at once, so time is required to go through and to become conscious by slow degrees of this manifold wealth. It follows that the poet can as well describe by slow degrees what I can observe by slow degrees in the painter; so that *collective actions* are the common domain of Painting and Poetry. They are, I say, their common domain, but so that they cannot build upon it in the same way.

Let it be granted that the contemplation of isolated parts in Poetry may take place as speedily as in Painting still their combination in the former is much more difficult than in the latter, and the whole cannot therefore have the same effect in Poetry as in Painting.

What it loses in the whole it must seek to win in the parts, and not carelessly paint a *collective action* in which each part, considered by itself, is not beautiful.

Painting does not need this rule; for in it the combina-

tion of the parts first contemplated can so quickly disappear that we really believe that we at once overlook the whole. Negligence in the parts is preferable to negligence in the whole ; and it is permissible and useful to mingle with these parts less beautiful and indifferent parts, so long as they contribute something to the effect of the whole.

This double rule,—namely, that the painter, in his representation of collective actions, must be more concerned with the beauty of the whole ; while the poet, on the other hand, must be more concerned with taking care, so far as possible, that each individual part is beautiful,—this double rule condemns a multitude of pictures by artists and poets, and is a safe guide to both in the choice of their subjects.

For example, Angelo painted on these principles his 'Last Judgment'. Without considering how much this picture must lose of the sublime on account of its reduced dimensions, for the very greatest picture must always be a 'Last Judgment' *en miniature*, it is not susceptible of any beautiful composition which can strike the eye at once ; and the too great number of figures, whatever high degrees of learning and art each may indicate, confuse and weary the eye.

The 'Dying Adonis' is an excellent picture by Bion ; but it is susceptible of a beautiful composition under the hand of the artist, because he has retained, I will not say all, but most of the traits of the poet. The dogs howling around him, that affecting trait of the poet, would, it appears to me, have produced a bad effect amid cupids and nymphs.

G. It is a consequence of the limits imposed upon the imitative arts that all the figures are immovable. The life of motion which they appear to have is the addition of our imagination : Art does no more than put our imagination in motion. Zeuxis, it is said, painted a boy who carried grapes, and in this picture Art had come so near Nature that the birds flew at it. But this made Zeuxis discontented with himself. I have painted, he said, the grapes better than the boy ; for had I painted him properly the birds would have been afraid of him, and kept away. How often a modest man is the victim of his own chicane ! I must invoke Zeuxis

**Zeuxis.** And had'st thou, dear master, made the boy ever so perfect, the birds would not have been scared from flying at the fruit. The eyes of beasts are more difficult to deceive than the eyes of men : they see nothing but what they actually do see : but, on the other hand, we are deceived by imagination into believing we see that which we do not see.

**H.** Speed is a phenomenon which relates at the same time to space and to time. It is the product of the length of the first, and the shortness of the last.

It cannot of itself be the object of Painting : and when Caylus carefully enjoins the artist whenever there is a question of swift steeds, to apply all his art to express this speed : one easily perceives that he can only show us the cause of it, in the efforts of the horses and the beginning of it in the first spring of the horses.

On the other hand the poets can in many ways express, so as to make generally sensible, this speed—inasmuch as (1) if the length of the space is known they can either confine our imagination to the shortness of the time : (2) or can adopt an extraordinary and enormous measure of space : (3) make no mention of space or time, but merely allow the inference of speed to be drawn from the traces which bodies put in motion leave upon their path.

(1.) When the wounded Venus retires in the chariot of Mars from the battle-field to Olympus : Iris seizes the reins, urges on the horses, the horses set off and arrive almost directly : \*

Πὰρ δέ οἱ Ἴρις ἔβαινεν ἡνία λάζετο χερσίν·  
Μάστιξεν δ' ἐλάαν, τῷ δ' οὐκ ἔκυντε πετέσθην·  
Αἶψα δ' ἔπειθ' ἴκοντο θεῶν ἔδος, αἶπὺν Ὀλυμπον.

The time in which the horses traverse the space from the battle-field to Olympus does not appear to be longer than the time which fills the interval between the mounting of the chariot and the seizure of the reins by Iris : between her seizing the reins and the driving off the spirited steeds. Another Greek Poet makes the time; so

\* *Iliad*, E 365

She mounted, and her waggoness was she that paints the air ;  
The horse she reined, and with a scourge importuned their repair,  
That of themselves out-flew the wind, and quickly they ascend  
Olympus, high seat of the gods. CHAPMAN.

to speak, yet more visibly disappear. Antipater says of Arias the prize runner in a foot race \*

\* Ἡ γὰρ ἐφ' ὑσπλήγγων, ἢ τέρματος εἶδε τις ἄκρου  
Π(θεον, μέσση δ' οὐκ οὐκ) ἐνὶ σταδίῳ

one sees the youth, either in the starting place or at the goal, in mid course one does not see him.

(2.) When Juno descends with Minerva, to staunch the outpouring of blood from the wounded Mars †

Ὅσσον δ' ἡεροιῆδες ἀνὴρ ἴδεν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν,  
Ἥμενος ἐν σκοπιῇ, λεύσσαν ἐπὶ οἶνόν τε πόντον,  
τόσσον ἐπιθρόσκουσι θεῶν ὑψηλές ἱπποι.

What a space, and this space but one bound! and it is only an ell of the whole way, at the end of which the goddesses have arrived in the lines which follow—Scipio Gentili in his observations upon Tasso, speaks of a great contemporary critic who had blamed Virgil, for allowing Mercury during his flight from Olympus to Carthage, to rest on Mount Atlas: *quasi che non si convenga ad uno Dio to stancarsi*. But, he continues, I do not understand this reproof: and certainly Tasso who had no scruple in imitating Virgil in this matter, understood it as little. For Tasso makes Gabriel, when he was sent down by God to Godfrey, to rest upon Lebanon: ‡ as Tasso has imitated Virgil, so Virgil has followed Homer, who causes Mercury, when sent by Jupiter to Calypso, to halt upon Mount Pierius.§ In my opinion Gentili should have said to the critic as follows: 'You must not consider this halting upon Mount Atlas as a sign of the weariness of the God. That would be altogether unbecoming. The intention of the poet is this: he wishes to give you a livelier idea of the length of the way, and therefore

\* *Anthol.* lib. i.

Either at the starting ropes or at the goal; at either end Visible; but never in the course between. R. P.

† *Iliad*, E 770

And how far at a view

A man into the purple sea may from a hill descry  
So far a high-neighing horse of heaven at every jump would fly.

CHAPMAN. R. P.

‡ Canto i, stanza 14.

§ *Odys.* Δ 50.

divides it into two parts, and leads you to conclude from the acknowledged length of the smaller half what must be the unknown length of the other half'. From the innermost recesses of Mount Olympus to Pierius or Atlas, or from these mountains to the Island of Ogygia, or to Carthage: and thus the length of the way becomes more sensibly present to me, than if it had been merely said from Olympus to Ogygia or Carthage. Tasso only lags a little behind the old poets, inasmuch as he chooses a mountain, too near the place to which the angel is sent. From Tortosa to Lebanon is too short a journey to enable me to conceive that the distance from Lebanon to Heaven is extremely long.

(3.) Of this third kind is the description by Homer of the mares of Erichthonius \*

Αἱ δ' ὅτε μὲν σκιρτῶεν ἐπὶ ζείδωραν ἄρουραν,  
 "Ἄκρον ἐπ' ἀνθερίκων καρπὸν θέον οὐδὲ κατέκλων  
 'Ἄλλ' ὅτε δὴ σκιρτῶεν ἐπ' εὐρέα νῶτα θαλάσσης,  
 "Ἄκρον ἐπὶ ῥηγμῖνος ἁλὸς πολιοῖο θέεσκον.

'They ran over the ears of corn, without bending them down, and they ran over the billowy foam of the sea'. It is philosophically true that bodies moved with extreme speed, leave no time to the bodies, over which they pass, to receive any impression. The moment when the pressure affects the corn is also the moment when it ceases: and the corn must in the same moment bend and recover

\* *Iliad*, γ 226

These twice six colts had pace so swift, they ran  
 Upon the top-ayles of corn-ears, nor bent them any whit;  
 And when the broad back of the sea their pleasure was to sit,  
 The superficies of his waves they slid upon their hoves  
 Not dipped in dank sweat of his brows. CHAPMAN. R. P.

*Illa vel intactae segetis per summa volaret  
 Gramina, nec teneras cursu laessisset aristas;  
 Vel mare per medium, fluctu suspensa tumentis,  
 Ferret iter, celeres nec tingeret aequore plantas.*

VIRGIL (says of Camilla), *Aen.* vii, 808.

Outstripped the winds in speed upon the plain,  
 Flew o'er the field, nor hurt the bearded grain:  
 She swept the seas, and, as she skimmed along,  
 Her flying feet unbathed in billows hung. DRYDEN.

Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,  
 Flies o'er the unbending corn and skims along the main.

Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, 372-3. R. P.



itself, that is, it must not bend at all. Madame Dacier, who translates the first *θείον* by *marchoient*, doubtless from some petty unworthy cause, did not dare to say *couroient* twice, but she thereby mars the whole beauty of the passage. For this *marchoient* involves a certain slowness which cannot possibly consist with the phenomenon described by Homer.

In the mean time, it may be said, this rapid uprising of the body underneath must make the motion somewhat slower, however infinitesimally, however imperceptibly. And therefore,\* Homer does not allow his Goddesses, when he wishes to give them all possible speed, to rise up at all, to touch the earth at all, but makes them pass away over it, and indeed without any successive movements of the feet, with legs closely joined to each other, because the alternate movement of them appears to require delay and impediment. This peculiar movement of his Goddesses, the poet likens to the flight of doves, as where he says of Juno and Minerva (*Iliad*, E 778)

Αἱ δὲ βήτην, τρήρωσι πελειάσιν ἴσμαθ' ὁμοῖαι,

for the flight of doves is most rapid when they dart forward with motionless pinions as Virgil says

Radii iter liquidum celeres neque commovet alas.

Eustathius indeed thinks that the comparison of the doves is instituted because the ancients believed that the footsteps of doves could not be seen. By his movement with feet close together Neptune also was recognised by Ajax, *Iliad*, Δ 71, according to the explanation of Heliodorus, *Anath.* lib. iii, p. 147, edit. Commel.

And Heliodorus remarks that because this position with legs closed together is an image of speed the Egyptians have so represented the figures of their Gods.

It occurs to me that this inference of speed might also be drawn from the hanging down of the arm in the Egyptian figures: for *dimissis manibus fugere*, said the ancients, is to fly with the utmost possible speed, and Aristotle expressly remarks, *ὅτι οἱ θεόντες θάττον θεοῦσι παρσελόντες τὰς χεῖρας*.†

\* De gressu Deorum v, Comment. in Virgil v, lib. 1, *Aeneid*: et vera incessu patuit Dea—et Woverius, cap. 1, *de Umbra*.

† *Aristot. de Incessu Animalium et Erasmi Adagia*, p. 660, edit. Francof. 1646.

Though this hanging down of the arms, this closed position of the legs was not peculiar to the Egyptian Divinities, but is generally common to their human figures. Why should this be so? It is certainly not the natural attitude, for though it appears to be the most simple, it is clear that it is the one most seldom used by men: for which reason I cannot understand why, according to Herr W. (p. 8) the beginning of art itself is to be traced to the Egyptian forms.

Perhaps it will be said it is the attitude of complete repose, and the Egyptian artists considered this attitude only as becoming and expedient in their immovable figures. But in these early days artists did not reason in this way, and the destination of art was shaped more by outward causes than by deliberate purpose.

Moreover this is my opinion: the Egyptian figures stood with their arms straight down, and their feet close together: add a third characteristic, with their eyes shut, and you have clearly the attitude of a corpse. Now let us remember what care the ancient Egyptians bestowed on their corpses, how much art and cost they expended in order to preserve them from corruption, and it is natural that they should also have endeavoured to maintain the dignified appearance of the dead man. This they especially introduced in painting and the imitative arts. They placed over the face of the corpse, a sort of mask on which they expressed a resemblance of the features of the dead person. Such a mask is the *Persona Aegyptiaca* to be found in Beger, t. iii, p. 402, which Herr Winkelmann incorrectly calls a mummy (p. 32, n. 2). Not only the face but the whole body was shut up in a kind of wooden mask which expressed the figure of the person, and which Herodotus expressly designates as *ξύλινον τύπον ἀνθρώποις*.\*

Herr Winkelmann indeed denies that the oldest Egyptian figures had their eyes closed, and explains the word *μεμυκῶτα* in Diodorus by *nictantia* (see 8 Ann. 3, and so Marsham has translated it, Can. Chron. p. 292 edit. Lips.). But the principal reason why he gives this explanation fails if you look closely into Diodorus. Diodorus does not say that the statues of Daedalus had their eyes closed. Herr Winkelmann maintains it, but

\* *ibid.*, p. 143, ed. Wesseling.

he says the exact contrary: the statues before Daedalus had their eyes shut, but Daedalus opened them, as he separated their legs and raised their arms.

My explanation of the origin of Egyptian art also explains why the Egyptian figures are with their backs against a pillar. It was the custom of the Egyptians to lean against a wall the coffins made in imitation of the figure of the corpse, and the first wooden or stone figure was nothing but a coarse imitation of such a coffin.

That which before the time of Daedalus was in Egypt nothing else than a religious custom, a mere aid to memory, was elevated by Daedalus to the rank of an Art, inasmuch as he made the imitations of living bodies take the place of the imitation of dead bodies: and from hence came all the fabulous stories that were invented of his works.

Moreover the Egyptian artists themselves must soon have followed this step in advance taken by Daedalus. For according to Diodorus (lib. 1), Daedalus himself had been in Egypt, and had there, by his Art, won immortal fame. 'No single Egyptian figure (says Herr W.) has been preserved which has the parallel of feet closely joined together according to the representation of some old writers' (p. 39). I do not wish to cast suspicion upon the statement of these old writers, which is too unanimous and express to deserve it. But we should consider that the most ancient works of sculpture, especially of the Egyptians, but also of the Greeks were made of wood: (Pausanias Corinth. cap. xix, p. 152, edit. Kuh.) so that our surprise at having no such figures ceases. It is enough that we may still see the parallel position of the feet in other works of the ancient Egyptian Art, as upon the *Tabula Isiaca*.

The Egyptians went no further than the first improvements of Daedalus: the Greeks advanced onwards to perfection.

J. From the difference of signs which the fine arts use is derived the possibility and facility of binding together several of them with each other in order to produce a common effect.

The difference, it is true, according to which one division of the fine arts employs arbitrary and another natural signs, cannot in this combination be taken into special

account. As arbitrary signs, for the very reason that they are arbitrary, can express all possible things in all their possible combinations, so considered from this point of view, their combination with natural signs is without exception possible.

Since, however, these arbitrary signs are at the same time signs which are successive, but natural signs are not all successive, for a kind of them must be co-existent; it is therefore a natural consequence that the arbitrary signs cannot as easily and as intimately be combined with both these kinds of natural signs.

It is clear that arbitrary signs successive in time can more easily and more intimately unite themselves with natural signs successive in time, than with natural signs co-existent in space. But as on both sides there may be a subdivision, accordingly as the signs address themselves to one or other of the senses, even this intimate union has

(1.) The union of arbitrary successive signs addressed to the ear with natural successive signs addressed to the ear, is unquestionably the most perfect of all possible unions, especially when this be added, that both signs are not only addressed to one sense, but also are produced at the same time by the same organ.

Of this kind is the union of Poetry and Music;\* it is such that Nature herself seems to have intended not so much a union of two arts, but rather one and the same art.

There has indeed been a time when both together made but one art. I will not deny that their separation has been natural, still less will I blame the use of the one without the other: but I must lament that on account of this separation the former union is no more remembered, or, if it be remembered, it is only for the purpose of making one art an accessory help to the other, and that no one knows how so to employ them equally as to produce a common effect. Moreover, it is to be recollected that there is practically only one kind of union in which Poetry is the auxiliary art, namely, in the opera; but the union in which Music is the auxiliary art is yet to be invented: or shall I say that in the operas the union of both has to be considered: namely, the union in which Poetry is the

\* On this subject see some remarks in Preface. R. P.

auxiliary art, by the Air ; and the union in which Music is the auxiliary art, by the Recitative ? It appears so ; only then the question arises whether this mixed union, where in its turn each art becomes subservient to the other, is naturally in one and the same whole, and whether the more voluptuous part, which is indisputably that in which the Poetry subserves the music, does not injure the other, and does not so delight our ear as to render the pleasure derived from the other too weak and too drowsy to satisfy us.

The subserviency in the two arts consists in this, that one is made the principal object before the other ; but not in this, that the one directs itself only in obedience to the other, and that when their different rules come into collision, the one gives way as much as possible to the other. For this was the case in the ancient union of Poetry and Music.

But wherefore these different rules, when it is true that the signs of both arts are capable of so intimate an union ? Because the signs of both operate, it is true, in the succession of time, but the measure of time which corresponds with the signs of the one and the signs of the other is not one and the same. In music the single isolated tones are not signs : they signify and express nothing : but its signs are the succession of tones which excite and express the passions. The arbitrary signs of words, on the other hand, have their signification in themselves : and a single sound, considered as an arbitrary sign, can express as much as music in a long succession of tones can render *sensible*. From hence comes the rule that Poetry which is combined with Music must not be of a constrained character ; that it is no merit in her to express the best thoughts in the fewest possible words, but rather she must employ the longest and most flexible words for the expression of each thought, in order to give to each thought as much extension as Music requires, for the purpose of expressing something approaching to it. It has been made a reproach against composers that the worst Poetry is the best for them, and it has been endeavoured to make them on this account ridiculous. But it is not that they like this kind of Poetry best because it is bad, but because it is not compressed and constrained. Now all Poetry which is not compressed

and constrained is not bad : it may, on the contrary, be very good, although considered simply as Poetry it might be susceptible of more energy and beauty. But in the case of which we are speaking, it should not be considered simply as Poetry.

That one language is more adapted for music than another is clearly indisputable ; only no nation will consent to allow the inferiority of its language in this respect. The unfitness, however, does not consist only in the rudeness and harshness of pronunciation, but also, as follows from the remark already made, in the brevity of the words ; and this is not because the short words are for the most part harsh and difficult to combine with each other, but simply on this account, that they are short, that they take up too little time, so that the music with its signs cannot keep equal pace with them.

Moreover, no language can be constructed so that its signs require as much time as the signs of music, and that is, I believe, the natural reason why whole passages are rested upon one syllable.

(2.) After this union of Poetry and Music, which is the most perfect of all, comes the arbitrary union of signs which are successive, addressed to the ear with arbitrary successive signs addressed to the eye, that is the union of Music with the Art of Dancing, and of Music and Poetry united with the Art of Dancing.

Of these three kinds of union, of which we find examples in the Ancients, the union of Music with the Art of Dancing is the more perfect. For although audible may be combined with visible signs, yet, on the other hand, the distinguishing measure of time, which these signs require, is wanting, which in the combination of Poetry with the Art of Dancing, or of Poetry and Music combined with the Art of Dancing, remains.

(3.) As there is a union of audible signs arbitrary and successive with audible signs natural and successive : may there not also be a union of visible signs arbitrary and successive with visible signs natural and successive ? \*

This I believe was the Pantomime of the Ancients considered independently of its connection with Music. For it is certain that the Pantomime did not consist only

\* The only art which makes use of visible signs arbitrary and successive would be the language of the dumb

of natural movements and attitudes, but that it was aided also by arbitrary signs, the signification of which depended upon convention.

This must be presumed in order to render probable the perfection of the old Pantomime, to which its union with Poetry greatly contributed. But this was a union of a peculiar kind, inasmuch as signs were not mutually united with signs, for only the succession of the one was directed according to the succession of the other, but in the execution this last was repressed.

Such were the unions which may be considered as perfect; the imperfect ones are those in which arbitrary successive signs were combined with natural co-existing signs, the principal of which is the union of Painting with Poetry.

It is clear that on account of the difference, namely, that the signs of the one are successive in Space, and the signs of the other are successive in Time, there can be no perfect union out of which a common action and effect can arise, but only a union in which one is subordinated to the other.

In the first place there is the union in which Painting is subordinated to Poetry. In this category is the custom of singers at a fair, who cause the subjects of their songs to be painted, and show the painting while they sing.

The union which Caylus speaks of has more resemblance to the kind in which the old Pantomime was combined with Poetry. That consisted in determining the succession of signs of the one by the succession of signs of the other.

The fact that Painting makes use of natural signs must always give her a great advantage over Poetry, which can only make use of arbitrary signs.

Nevertheless, the two are in this respect not so far apart from each other as at first sight might appear, and Poetry has indeed not only natural signs, but also the means of elevating its arbitrary signs to the dignity and vigour of natural signs.

In the first place, it is certain that the earliest languages arose out of *onomatopoeia*, and that the first invented words had a certain resemblance to the things which

they expressed. Such words are to be found still in all languages, more or less, according as the language itself is more or less removed from its origin. From the intelligent use of these words there arises what we call a musical expression in Poetry, of which there are frequent and manifold examples.

On the other hand, widely as the various languages differ from each other, for the most part in single words, yet they have still much resemblance in that class of sounds which in all probability were the first which the first men uttered. I mean which are prompted by the passions. The little words, with which we express our joy and our sorrow, in one word, the Interjections, are pretty much the same in all languages, and deserve, therefore, to be considered as natural signs. A great abundance of such particles is certainly a perfection in a language, and although I well know what an abuse bad writers can make of them, yet I am not satisfied with the cold decorum which would banish them altogether. Let any one observe by what a multitude and variety of Interjections *The Philoctetes* of Sophocles expresses his pain. A translator into a modern language must be sorely perplexed in finding a substitute for them.

Poetry, moreover, employs not only single words, but these words in a certain connection and succession. Although these single words are not natural signs, yet, taken in connection and succession, they may have the force of natural signs. For instance, when the words follow in the same order and succession as the things themselves which they express. This is another poetical artifice which has not been sufficiently investigated, and which deserves to be illustrated by examples.

What has been said proves that Poetry is not altogether deficient in natural signs. But she has a means of elevating her arbitrary signs to the dignity of natural signs, namely, Metaphor. For as the force of natural signs consists in their resemblance to the things which they represent, so Poetry, instead of this resemblance which she has not, introduces another resemblance which the designated thing has with another thing, the idea of which can be more easily and more vividly awakened in us.

To this category of employment of metaphors similes



also belong. For a simile is in reality nothing more than an extended metaphor, or, in other words, a metaphor is nothing more than a contracted simile. The impossibility in which Painting finds herself of employing this means, gives a great advantage to Poetry, inasmuch as she possesses a kind of signs which have the force of natural signs, though she is obliged to express them through arbitrary signs.

Not every use of arbitrary, successive, audible signs is poetry. Why should every use of natural, successive, visible signs be painting, seeing that Painting is recognised as the sister of Poetry?

As there is a use of words which has not illusion for its proper object, which seeks rather to inform than to please, rather to make itself intelligible than to carry you along with it; that is, as language has its prose, so must Painting have it also.

There are poetical and prosaic painters.

Prosaic painters are those which do not paint the objects they imitate in their natural relation with their signs.

(1.) Their signs are co-existent in space; those who paint signs which are successive in time.

(2.) Their signs are natural; those who mingle them with arbitrary signs, the allegorists.

(3.) Their signs are visible; those who will not represent the visible through the visible, but represent what is addressed to the ear or the objects of other senses: illustration, *The Enraged Musician* of Hogarth.

Painting, we say, makes use of natural signs. This is true, in general. Only you must not represent that she makes use of no arbitrary signs. We will speak of this in another place.

And in the next place we should observe that her natural signs in certain circumstances cease altogether to be so.

I mean to say this: Of these natural signs the principal are lines, and figures composed from them. Now, it is not enough that these lines should have the same relations with each other which they have in Nature; each one of them must have the same, and not merely a reduced, dimension which they have in Nature, or which

they would have from that point of view in which the painting should be regarded.

The painter, moreover, who wishes to employ perfectly natural signs must paint objects as large as life or not much less than as large. The painter who remains far below this standard, who paints little cabinet pieces,—the miniature painter may indeed be in this line a great artist: only he must not desire that his works should have the truth or produce the effect which the works of the other artist have and produce.

A human figure of half a foot or an inch is indeed the image of a man, but it is in some sort a symbolical image. It makes me more conscious of the sign than of the thing signified. My imagination must first elevate to its real size the reduced figure, and this intellectual operation, however rapid and easy, always prevents the intuition of the thing signified from following immediately the intuition of the sign.

It may be objected, that 'the dimensions of visible things, so far as they are perceived by us, are variable; they depend upon distance, and there are distances at which the human figure appears only half a foot or an inch high, and therefore we have but to suppose that this reduced figure was taken from a distance in order that these signs may appear perfectly natural'.

But I answer: At that distance at which a human figure appears to be only of the size of half a foot or of an inch, it appears indistinctly; but it is not so that we see reduced figures in the foreground of small pictures, and the distinctness of their parts contradicts the idea of distance, but forcibly reminds us that the figures are reduced and not taken from a distance.

In the next place, it is well known how much the grandeur of dimensions contributes to the sublime. This sublime is entirely lost by the process of reduction in pictures. The lofty towers, the sternest and rudest precipices, the overhanging cliffs, will not cause a shadow of the terror and giddiness which they produce in nature, and which in some degree is also produced in Poetry. What a picture that is in Shakspeare when Edgar leads Gloucester to the outermost edge of the cliff, from which he wishes to throw himself down!

Come on, sir !

Here 's the place ; stand still. How fearful  
And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low.  
The crows and choughs, that wing the midway air,  
Show scarce so gross as beetles. Half-way down  
Hangs one that gathers samphire ; dreadful trade !  
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head :  
The fishermen that walk upon the beach  
Appear like mice ; and yon tall anchoring bark  
Diminish'd to her cock ; her cock a buoy  
Almost too small for sight. The murmuring surge  
That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes  
Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more,  
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight  
Topple down headlong.

Compare with this passage of Shakspeare the passage in Milton (bk. vii, v. 210), where the Son of God looks down into the bottomless abyss of chaos. The depth in this passage is much grander, and yet the description of it produces no effect, because there is nothing to render us sensible of it : the effect which Shakspeare so excellently produced by means of the gradual diminution of the objects.

K. Reduced dimensions weaken the effect in Painting.

A beautiful image in miniature cannot possibly excite the same pleasure which the image in its true dimensions would excite. But in cases where the dimensions cannot be preserved, the spectator will at least expect to be placed in a position to judge of them from a comparison with certain recognised and determined dimensions.

The best known and best determined standard of dimensions is the human figure. Therefore almost all measures of length are taken from the human figure or particular parts of it : a yard, a foot, arm's length, a step, an ell, man's height, &c.

So I believe that the human figures of the landscape painter, besides the effect of introducing a higher life into his picture, render also the important service of furnishing a standard whereby to measure all other objects, and their distances from each other.

Deprived of this standard, he is obliged to supply the want of a certain measure by the introduction of other things which man employs for his use or convenience, and for this object has proportioned to his size—a house, a hedge, a bridge, a path, can do this office, &c.

And if the artist wishes to paint a wholly uncultivated

desert, a forlorn region without men, or the trace of men, he must at least introduce wild beasts of a known size, and from the proportion they bear to the other objects must form a judgment as to their proper dimensions.

The want of an ascertained and known standard may have an evil effect in historical pictures as well as in landscapes. 'The poetical invention', says Herr von Hagedorn,\* 'as soon as it is given up to mere imagination suffers dwarfs and giants side by side: but the pictorial invention is not so good-natured and flexible'. He illustrates his meaning by a famous picture of antiquity, the sleeping Cyclops of Timanthes. In order to express the enormous size of this giant, the artist has caused a satyr close to him to measure his thumb with a thyrsus. Herr von Hagedorn thinks the device ingenious, but that in a pictorial combination it is at variance with the first principles of the art of grouping, with our modern ideas of *chiaro oscuro*, and that it is injurious to the natural equilibrium of the picture. We can rely upon the word of Herr von Hagedorn that this object has all the inconveniences which he has noticed. But these are only inconveniences to the eye of a practised connoisseur: I add another, which is taken from my former remarks on dimensions, which are obvious to every eye, and especially to the unpractised eye.

When the poet speaks of the giant and the dwarf, I know from his language that he is speaking of the two *extrema* to which the human figure can vary from its usual size. But when the painter combines a great and a little figure, how do I know that these are the two *extrema*? It is competent to me to take the little or the great figure as the standard of ordinary size. If I take the little figure for it, then the great one becomes a Colossus; if I take the great one for it the little one becomes a Lilliputian. In the one case I can imagine a yet greater, in the other case a yet smaller standard. It, moreover, remains undecided whether the painter meant to represent a dwarf or a giant, or both: Julio Romano is not the only painter who has imitated the device of Timanthes.† Francis Floris‡ has also employed it in his

\* Von der Mahlercy, p. 169.

† Richardson, i. p. 84.

‡ Francis Floris was born at Antwerp in 1520; he died in 1570. His works were at one time held in great esteem.

picture of Hercules among the Pigmies, which Herr Cock has engraven in 1563. I doubt whether he has been very happy in his imitation, inasmuch as he has represented the Pigmies, not as misshapen and hump-backed dwarfs, but as little men formed in due proportions, so that I should not know whether they are not men of ordinary size, and the Hercules sleeping under the oak a giant, did I not recognise Hercules by his club and lion's skin, and did I not know that antiquity had represented Hercules as a man of great stature indeed, but not as a monster. Timanthes makes a Satyr measure with a thyrsus the thumb of the Cyclops; Floris makes a Pigmy measure the footsteps of Hercules with a staff. It is true that the Hercules is in the contemplation of the Pigmy as good a giant as the Cyclops in the contemplation of the Satyr. Nevertheless, the like measurement does not produce the like effect. The Satyrs might be recognised by their form, and their size was the ordinary human stature. When they measure the thumb of the Cyclops they make me clearly understand how much the greater the Cyclops is than the Satyr. So it is with the Pigmies; the measuring by the Pigmies awakens an idea of the great size of Hercules, but the question is not here as to the grandeur of Hercules, but as to the littleness of the Pigmies, and this idea Floris has represented in the most vivid manner. But this could not well be otherwise done than by giving the dwarfs, besides their littleness, other qualities which we are in the habit of associating with them; as for instance, deformity or the disproportioned relation of their breadth to their length. He should have made them more like to the figures in convex or concave mirrors with which Aristotle compares them.\*

L. One of the most *perspective* similes is that in which Homer likens the shield of Achilles, or rather the gleaming of it, with the gleaming of fire which gives its light from a solitary height to the sea-faring man caught in a storm. Yet here the *places* rather than the successions of time are placed one after the other

---

Jerome Cock, or Kock, was a painter and engraver at Antwerp; he died about 1570. R. P.

\* Aristoteles *Probl.* sect. x. according to the emendation of Vossius ad Pompon. Melam. lib. iii. c. 8. p. 287.

Αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα σάκος μέγα τε στιβαρόν τε  
 ἔϊλετο, τοῦ δ' ἀπάνευθε σέλας γένετ', ἦϊτε μήνης.  
 Ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἂν ἐκ πόντοιο σέλας ναύτησι φανεῇ  
 καιομένοιο πυρός· τὸ δὲ καίεται ὑψόθ' ὄρεσφιν,  
 Σταθμῶ ἐν οἰοπόλῳ· τοὺς δ' οὐκ ἐθέλοντας ἀελλαι  
 Πόντον ἐπ' ἰχθυόεντα φίλων ἀπάνευθε φέρουσιν.\*

The gleaming of the shield, the foreground ; the gleaming which the sailors see, the second ; the fire on the heights which causes this gleaming, the third ; the friends, from whom they are driven away far over the sea, the fourth.

M. 'Pliny', says Herr Winkelmann,† 'tells us that in the reign of Nero the art of casting in bronze was lost, and he invokes the colossal statue of this Emperor by Zenodorus, who, notwithstanding all his art, failed in this work. But we must not conclude with Donati and Nardini that this statue was of marble'.

It is certain that Donati and Nardini misunderstood and have drawn a false conclusion from this passage of Pliny. But Herr Winkelmann also cannot have examined it with his usual acuteness or he would have expressed himself otherwise. Did Zenodorus not succeed in this statue ? Where does Pliny say so ? Rather does he report of him that he was second to none in the exercise of his art, that his work bore an uncommon resemblance, that he had already given proofs of his skill in the casting of a colossal Mercury. And the eagerness of succeeding Emperors to leave Nero no share in the honours of this statue, to dedicate it to the Sun, to change the head of Nero for a head of their own, the incredible pains which they took to carry it away and put it up in some other place : what conclusion can we draw from all this but that it must have been a work of very peculiar merit ? Pliny says it is true : *ea statua indicavit interiisse fundendi aeris scientiam*. But these are the very words which have

\* *Iliad*, T 373, etc.

And as from sea sailors discern a harmful fire, let run  
 By herdsmen's faults, till all their stall flies up in wrastling flame,  
 Which being on hills is seen far off, but being alone, none came  
 To give it quench ; at shore no neighbours, and at sea their friends  
 Driven off with tempests ; such a fire from his bright shield extends  
 His ominous radiance ; and in heaven impressed his fervent blaze.

CHAPMAN. R. P.

† In his *Geschichte der Kunst*.

been misinterpreted. It has been supposed that they reveal the loss of the art to cast in metal, whereas all they assert is the loss of the art to give to this metal a certain alloy (*temperaturam aeris*) which was believed to have existed in the old works of art of this kind. Zenodorus was wanting in a knowledge of the chemical mystery, not in plastic skill. And really this chemical mystery consisted herein, that the ancients must have mixed gold and silver with the copper out of which they used in the casting of their statues, *quondam aes confusum auro argentoque miscebatur*.\* The secret was entirely lost, and in the mingling of metals which the artists of that day used, there was nothing but lead, as Pliny himself clearly explains.† Now let the whole passage be read: 'ea statua indicavit interiisse fundendi aeris scientiam, cum et Nero largiri aurum argentumque paratus esset, et Zenodorus scientia fingendi caelandique nulli veterum postponeretur'.‡

In vain did the squandering Nero bestow his silver and gold: the artist could not use it: he understood only a very inferior alloy: but the inferior metal which he employed had no influence on his art, in which he was equal to any ancient artist: Pliny says so: Pliny had seen his work; we must believe him.

'The beautiful Seneca in bronze', says Herr Winkelmann in a later work,§ 'which has been recently discovered in Herculaneum, is sufficient alone to bear testimony against Pliny, who declares, that in the reign of Nero nobody knew how to cast in bronze'. Whom can we more truly trust as to the beauty of this work than Herr Winkelmann? But, as I have shown, he is fighting with a shadow; Pliny does not say what he makes him say; I know the passage upon which Herr Winkelmann relies: namely, where Pliny speaks of the costly alloy of the old bronze, and adds, 'et tamen ars pretiosior erat: nunc incertum est pejor haec sit an materia'. But he is speaking comparatively, and must be understood to be speaking of most but not of all the works of his time: because he himself gives very different testimony about Zenodorus, and undoubtedly the artist of the Seneca, which has been referred to, deserved it.

\* Plin. lib. xxxiv. cap. 7.

† L. xxiv.

‡ L. xxxiv.

§ Nachrichten von den neuesten Herculanischen Entdeckungen s. 35.

N.\* Some thoughts on the continuation of my Laocoon : I maintain that the true end of an art can only be that for which it is peculiarly and alone fit, and not that which other arts can attain as well if not better than it. I find in Plutarch a comparison which well illustrates this position. 'Who', says he (de Audit. p. 43, ed. Xyl.), 'will split wood with a key and open a door with an axe, does not so much destroy his instruments, as deprive himself of the use of both'.

According to Petit, this work of art must necessarily have been later than Virgil's description of it: for he insists that the whole episode of the Laocoon is an invention of Virgil's (*Miscell. Observ. lib. iv. cap. xiii. p. 294*). 'Tametsi Servius revera hoc Laocoonti accidisse ex Euphorione refert: quod piaculum contraxisset coeundo cum uxore ante simulacrum numinis. Verosimilius tamen est, a Marone hoc totum fuisse inventum, ac pro machina inductum qua dignum vindice nodum explicaret, quomodo videlicet ausi sint Trojani tam enormem et concavam simulacri compagem transferre in urbem, etc.' But it is easy to overthrow this opinion of Petit: inasmuch as the traces of the same history of Laocoon in earlier and in Greek writers are both many and clear.

O. (Cap. xxx.) Herr Winkelmann has explained himself more definitely in his history of Art. He also acknowledges that repose is a consequence of beauty.

Necessity of expressing yourself as precisely as possible upon this kind of thing. A false ground is worse than no ground.

(xxxI.) Herr Winkelmann appears to have derived this highest law of beauty entirely from the ancient works of Art. But one may arrive with equal certainty at the same conclusion from principles of reason. For as the plastic arts are alone sufficient to produce the form of beauty: as they need no help from any other Art for this purpose: as other arts are incapable in this respect: so it is quite indisputable that this beauty is their peculiar and proper end.

(xxxII.) But corporeal beauty requires more than beauty of form. It requires beauty of colour and beauty of expression.



The difference in respect to beauty of colours between carnation and colouring. Carnation is the colouring of such objects as have a distinct beauty of form, and especially of the human body. Colouring is especially the use of local colours.

Difference with respect to matter of expression between the transitory and the permanent. The first is violent, and consequently not beautiful. The second is the consequence of the frequent repetition of the first, not only does it ally itself with beauty, but it gives more variety to the beauty.

(xxxiii.) Ideal of corporeal beauty. What is it? It consists especially in the ideal of form: but also in the ideal of carnation and permanent expression.

The mere colouring and the transitory expression have no ideal: because nature herself has given no determined character to them.

(xxxiv.) The transporting of the pictorial ideal into poetry is false. In the former is an ideal of bodies, in the latter an ideal of actions. Dryden in his Preface to *Fresnoy*. Bacon in *Lowth*.

(xxxv.) Still more extravagant it would be to expect and require from the poet not only perfect moral beings, but also perfectly beautiful corporeal beings. Nevertheless it is what Herr Winkelmann does in his criticism on Milton (*Geschichte der Kunst*, p. 28). Winkelmann seems to have a slight acquaintance with Milton, otherwise he would know, what has been long ago remarked, that he alone knew how to paint the devil without having recourse to physical ugliness.

Some such refined form of devilish ugliness, Guido had, perhaps, in his head (v. Dryden's *Preface to the Art of Painting*, p. 9). But neither he nor any one else has executed the idea. But Milton's ugly forms, such as sin and death, do not belong to his principal action, but only serve to fill up his episodes.

Milton's conception of separating in the devil the tormentor from the tormented, which in vulgar opinion are combined.

(xxxvi.) But very few pictures can be painted from the principal action of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. True; but it does not follow that they could not be painted by Milton.

Poetry paints by a single trait: Painting must add all the rest. In the former there may be something very picturesque which in the latter cannot be executed.

(xxxvii.) Consequently it is not on account of the preeminent genius of Homer that everything with him is capable of being painted: but this is solely on account of his choice of subject.

Proof of this:—First Proof—from the various invisible objects which Homer has treated as unpicturesquely as Milton—example, Discord.

(xxxviii.) Second Proof—from the visible objects which Milton has admirably treated,—Love in Paradise—the simplicity and poverty of the Painter on this subject. On the contrary, the riches of Milton.

(xxxix.) Strength of Milton in successive pictures,—examples of this in all the books of *Paradise Lost*.

(xl.) Milton's painting of individual sensible objects. In this he would have surpassed Homer, if we had not already demonstrated that it does not belong to Poetry.

My opinion that this painting is a consequence of his blindness. Traces of this blindness in several distinct passages. Proof conversely that Homer was not blind.

(xli.) Fresh confirmation that Homer only permitted himself to use successive pictures, by contradicting certain objections taken from his description of Pallastes in the *Iliad*. He wished only to awaken the idea of greatness,—description of the garden of Alcinous, even in this he does not describe as beautiful objects which on a sudden appear to the eye, while in nature they are not so.

(xlii.) In Ovid the successive pictures are most frequent and most beautiful: and precisely for this reason, because they have not been painted and cannot be painted.

(xliii.) Among pictures of action there is a kind in which the action does not gradually express itself in a single body, but is distributed in various successive bodies. These I call collective actions, and they are those which are common to Painting and Poetry, though with different limitations.

(xliv.) As the poet paints bodies only indicatively by motion—so he endeavours to detect the visible properties of bodies in their motion, as for instance, great size,

Example, from the height of a tree—from the breadth of a pyramid—from the great size of a serpent.

(XLV.) Of motion in painting: why only men and no beasts are susceptible of it?

(XLVI.) Of speed: and the various ways the poet has of expressing it.

The passage in Milton, bk. x, v. 90. The general reflection on the speed of the Gods has by no means the effect that the picture, which Homer would in one way or the other have made of it for us, would have had. Perhaps he would have said instead of 'down he descended straight' \* (er stieg sogleich herab), he had descended (er war herabgestiegen).

\* and all the coast in prospect lay.

Down he descended straight: the speed of Gods

Time counts not tho' with swiftest minutes wing'd. *Par. Lost*, x.

THE END

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